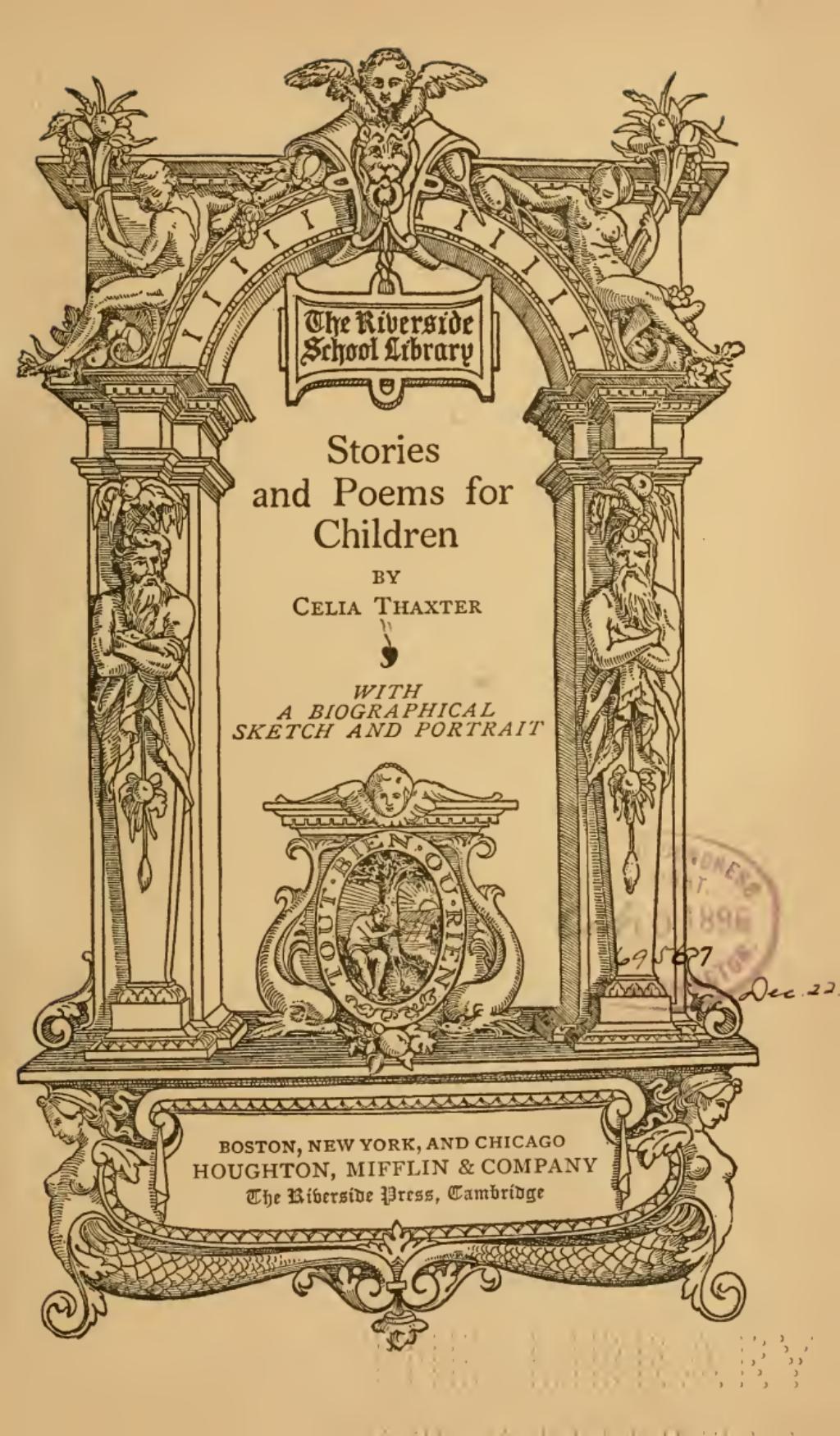


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Celia Hartin



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Stories
and Poems for
Children

BY
CELIA THAXTER

WITH
*A BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCH AND PORTRAIT*



BOSTON, NEW YORK, AND CHICAGO
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY
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I AM sure that if Mrs. Thaxter had lived to complete the arrangement of this book of stories and verses for children, she would have dedicated it to her dear grandchildren and to the little nieces so near to her heart. I know that she would like to have me stand in her place and say that this book is made for them first of all, and I am sure that it will help those who cannot well remember her to know something of her beautiful generous kindness and delightful gayety, her gift of teaching young eyes to see the flowers and birds ; to know her island of Appledore and its sea and sky.

S. O. J.

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CELIA THAXTER: A SKETCH.

No childhood could have been passed more profitably for the strengthening of native gifts of poetry and feeling than the childhood which befell Celia Thaxter. Her father, T. B. Laighton, lived in Portsmouth, N. H., where she was born in 1835. A disappointment in public affairs was said ever afterwards to have bent his strong nature out of all sympathy with his fellow-towns-men; and when his daughter was five years old, he left Portsmouth to become the keeper of a lighthouse on one of the desolate Isles of Shoals, lying about ten miles off the New Hampshire coast. He vowed at this time never to set foot on the mainland again, and kept his vow. It is told that he would sometimes point out to his children, Cedric, Oscar, and Celia, the far line of land on the horizon, and tell them that was "the wicked world." How complete the family's isolation was, especially in winter and before they moved from White Island to the larger Appledore, a word of Mrs. Thaxter's own will suggest: "Into the deep window-seats we climbed, and with pennies (for which we had no other use) made round holes in the thick frost, breathing on them till they were warm, and peeped out at the bright, fierce, windy weather, watching the vessels scudding over the intensely dark blue sea all 'feather white.' "

In a place where pennies "had no other use" we may be sure, however, that resources were not lacking to children of active minds. Their father was their teacher in books, the sea and the shore their guides to the great knowledge which Nature opens to her pupils. Celia Laighton was wisely allowed to read her full of romance and poetry; the storms and calms, the wild flowers and birds, the march of the seasons, all gave her something of their lore, a wisdom in which she grew richer all her life; the solitude, like that of any imaginative child, taught her the secrets of a child's heart, and fixed in her that sympathy with children which speaks through the pages that follow these words. The story of her early years is one to keep us from forgetting that the truest education may come to those fitted to receive it through channels with which the schools have nothing to do.

Her marriage was as unlike that of most women as her girlhood had been. To her father's house on Appledore, the island to which the family had moved when Celia was eleven years old, came, among other boarders, a young lawyer of Watertown, Mass., Mr. Levi L. Thaxter. Of quiet, scholarly tastes, he wished to remove himself from the world, and had not thought to find in his landlord's daughter of fifteen, grown old in many ways beyond her years, a woman whose hand he soon sought in marriage. Her father's opposition, on the ground that she was but a child, lasted only a year, and in 1851, when she was sixteen, she became Mrs. Thaxter.

Her removal for the winters to the neighborhood of Boston opened wide to her the unknown delights of music, pictures, theatres, and friendships. Into them all she entered with zest. Music especially, of which she could have heard very little in Appledore, became one of the truest pleasures of her life. "Artists who sang to her," a friend has written, "or those who rehearsed the finest music on the piano or violin or flute, or those who brought their pictures and put them before her while she listened, — they alone, in a measure, understood what these things signified, and how she was lifted quite away by them from the ordinary level of life."

In 1861 her first printed poem appeared. Of this she herself once wrote; "I had written some verses in pencil on an envelope I happened to have in my pocket and sent them to a friend, a woman who I knew sympathized with my homesickness for the sea. She gave them to a relative who was connected with a magazine, and he handed them to James Russell Lowell, then editor of the magazine [the *Atlantic*], who christened them 'Land-locked' and printed them without a word to me, and the first thing I knew, I saw my verses in print, to my profound astonishment. After that I had to write for my friends, James T. Fields, and John G. Whittier, and others insisted on it. 'Write — thee must — it is thy kismet,' said the great, good poet, and so I did."

This beginning of publication was followed by constant writing in prose and verse. Four volumes of poems,

between 1873 and 1885, told the story of her inmost thoughts. The ardent love of all the things within doors and without for which she cared most, the unfailing courage of a strong soul, the hand of an artist, are clearly to be felt in these books. Her two prose works, "Among the Isles of Shoals" (1873), tells much of her early life, and "An Island Garden" (1894) describes her flowers at Appledore and the loving labor which made them the glory of the island.

After her father's death, her mother's loneliness brought her more and more to the islands. Her three sons had been born in her early married life. In 1877 Mrs. Laighton died, and in 1884 Mr. Thaxter. From this time she made her winter home in Portsmouth, and was at Appledore for the rest of the year. One short trip abroad in 1880 was her only departure from the places in New England which none knew better than she. If she did not go out to see the world it came to her. Her house at Appledore was every summer the meeting-place of painters, musicians, and writers, who found in Mrs. Thaxter's generous friendship such inspiration as few natures have the power to give. Richly blest herself with artistic gifts, both of appreciation and of creation, she had besides a quality of strong human feeling which is no less rare. She died at Appledore August 26, 1894, leaving a name in New England letters and life which must remain distinctively her own.

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

THE SPRAY SPRITE

ONCE upon a time, a thousand years ago, there dwelt by the sea a little maid. Had I said *in* the sea, it would perhaps have been as well, for such a spray sprite never danced before at a breaker's edge. It was bliss to her to watch that great sea, to hear its sweet or awful voices, to feel the salt wind lift her thick brown hair and kiss her cheek; to wade, barefooted, into the singing, sparkling brine. Above all things, she hated to sew patchwork. Oh, but she was a naughty child,—not at all like the good, decorous little girls who will perhaps read this story. She did n't like to sweep and dust, and keep all things bright and tidy. She wished to splash in the water the whole day long, and dance, and sing, and string shells, and be idle like the lovely white kittiwakes that flew to and fro above her, and came at the beckoning of her hand. She looked with scorn on dolls and all their appointments, and never wished to play with them,—it was almost as bad as patchwork! But she loved the

sky, and all the clouds and stars, the sun that made a glory in the east and west at morning and evening, the changing moon, the streaming Northern Lights. The winds seemed human, so much they had to say to her. She thought, "The north wind fights me; the west wind plays with me; the east wind sighs, and is always ready to weep; the south wind loves and kisses me." Every wave that whitened the face of the vast sea was dear to her; every bird that floated over, every sail that glided across, — all brought her a thrill of joy. And what a wild and keen delight came to her with the thunder, lightning, and the rain! — but with all her heart she hated the cold, white snow. Much she liked to creep out of the house in the dusk of dawn and climb the highest rocks to see the morning break. Wrapping herself close from the chill wind, curling into a niche of the rough granite cliff, how beautiful it was, all alone with the soaring gulls, to watch the east grow rosy, rosier to the very zenith, till she shouted with joy, facing the uprisen sun! Then it was so splendid to stand on the rocks when the billows came tumbling in, sending the spray flying high in the air, and throwing handfuls of crimson dulse at her, or long brown tresses of seaweed, which she caught and flung back again, while she was drenched with the shower, and the wind blew her about in rough play. And blissful it was to run with the sandpipers along the edge of the shallow waves on the little beach, and dance in

the clear green water; or, at low tide, to hang over the still surface of pools among the rocks, wherein lay treasures untold.

Oh, those gardens of the sea! who shall describe their beauty? It was as if a piece of rainbow had fallen and melted into them, such myriads of many-colored creatures and plants inhabited them. Dear children, if I were to talk to you the whole day, I could not tell you half the wonderful things she saw in those clear depths. But I think she liked best of them all the dainty Eolis, a delicate shell-less snail, with rosy spines and tiny horns.

To watch all this marvelous life at the edge of the wild ocean was enchanting, and she never wearied of it. Then, among the higher rocks, grew a few land plants and grasses, and a single root of fern, a world of delight to her; a whole tropical forest would not have been so precious. She gathered plumes of the bright goldenrod that nodded in the clefts, and crowned herself with long garlands of the wild pink morning-glory; and the gulls and the sandpipers looked at her, and wondered, I dare say, what she did it for;—they could have told quite as well as she. To the little pimpernel, always ready to shut its scarlet flowers at the slightest shadow of a cloud, she said: “I love you, pimpernel, for you’re always dreaming, and that’s what I like to do.” And so she did dream, and with the everlasting sound of the sea in her ears, I wonder she ever believed anything to be real!

She was a very happy little maid and perfectly content, but still she could not help longing to know what lay beyond the round horizon that hemmed her in with the waves, and many and many a day, rocking in her little boat on the tranquil water, she gazed at the dim line where the sky seemed to rest on the sea, and pondered until she was lost in a maze of aimless thought.

"Over there, beyond the faint blue cloud of distant coast, lies the great world," she said. "Is it beautiful there?" Sometimes at sunrise it looked most beautiful, flushed with delicious color,—purple, and rose, and gold. Vessels glided by, hither and thither, at all times of the day and night. Whence came they? Whither did they go? If, in the morning sunshine, she saw the shadow of one sail fall upon another, as some craft passed near, the sight made this little savage so happy, that it was better than if she had found a mine of gold,—the foolish thing to be happy at a shadow!

She laughed and talked with the loons, and learned to imitate their weird wild cry; she stretched her arms up to the big burgomaster gull flying over, crying, "Take me to ride with you, burgomaster, between your broad wings!" Driftwood came sailing to the shore, bits of bark,—on what tree did they grow? she wondered. Pieces of oars,—who had paddled with them? Laths, sticks, straws, blocks, logs, branches,

cones, tangled with ribbon-grass kelp and rock-weed, — each thing had a history if she did but know it, she thought. Sometimes came a green fir bough; there was a wonder, for no trees grew among her rocks, there was not soil enough to hold their roots. Sometimes she came upon tokens of wreck and disaster that made her heart shrink, for she did not like to think that pain was in this lovely world wherein she was so glad to be alive.

But she always fancied she should find some strange and costly thing as she sought among the weeds and drift, — that some mysterious and beautiful thing would come floating across the sea for her, among the odds and ends, one day, and something *did* come, as you shall hear.

One night she was playing on the beach alone; she gathered shells and seaweeds; full of joy, she laughed and sang to herself. It was high tide and sunset; all the west was red and clear; a golden glory lay along the calm water from the sinking sun to her feet, as she stood at the edge of the tide. Near by, the lighthouse began to twinkle in crimson and gold; far off, large vessels, with their sails full of the twilight, passed by, silent and slow. The waves made a continual talking among themselves, and sweet and disconsolate came the cry of the sandpipers along the shore. All else was very still. She stopped her play and sat down on a rock, and let her bare feet drop within reach of

the water, while she watched the gulls slowly floating home, by twos and threes, through the lovely evening sky. She smiled to see them beat the air with their wide wings, with a slow and measured motion. She knew where their lonesome rock lay, far out on the eastern sea.

By and by all were gone; the red faded, but a pure and peaceful light still held the west, and the stars came out one after one. She sat still there a long time; the warm wind wrapped her close, she felt no chill with the falling dew. Wistfully peering out toward the horizon-line, she did not for some time notice that the sea was full of cool fire, "sparks that snap and burst and flee;" every wave left its outline in vanishing gold on the wet weeds and sand; her feet were covered; it was as if she had on golden-spangled slippers. That was charming! The tide had begun to fall now, and left bare a gray rock worn and polished by the waves—heaven knows how many thousands of years!—till it was as smooth as satin. She laid her cheek against it, the dear old gray rock! it was her pet pillow. Though the water had just flowed over it, it was warm yet from the sun which had blazed down all the long clear summer day. Then she watched the pale flame glowing, and fading, and glowing again, till— Well, I never could be quite sure how much of what I am going to tell you she dreamed, and how much really happened, but the main points are certainly true.

After she had been watching and listening awhile, she became aware of an unaccustomed sound among the noises of the washing tide and whispers of the wind. Presently she perceived, between the tide-mark and the ebbing water, two dim, slender figures busy among the weeds, and sweet, clear voices reached her with a merry mingling of talk and laughter. The figures drew near,—a youth, dark and brilliant, a maiden, bright and fair. They were filling little baskets with the phosphorescent sparks, and every spark they touched became a permanent star, so that the little baskets were overflowing with the harmless flame. She could not comprehend their talk, but she watched them eagerly. The youth dipped his finger into the pale fire, and touched with it the girl's white forehead, and left there a spark that flickered upward, then brightened and stood steady, a glittering star, so beautiful above her dusky hair! And the child saw the fairy maiden blush as she swung the basket lightly to her shoulder. She rose up as they turned, and confronted them, and both sprang toward her. "Child of the spray," they cried, "it is thyself we came to seek;" and grasping her hands, they drew her gently after them into a small, lonely cove, where the water lay like a mirror, with all the stars in heaven shining out of it.

And by the starlight what an enchanting sight she saw! Moored close to the beach, a fairy fleet was

waiting motionless, — seven great purple mussel-shells as large as her own little skiff, each lined with mother-of-pearl, and strewn with silken cushions; in each a tapering mast, from which drooped lightly down the idle sail, shining like silver, bright as if woven of thistle-down. And at each curling prow was set a cluster of phosphorescent stars, gleaming and never disappearing, and every boat had its merry crew of fairy creatures, and in the midst, alone in his skiff, sat a fairy prince with a golden crown. When they saw their comrades bringing the spray child, they set up a sweet outcry, and pushed the boats ashore with slender oars, and leaped out and danced about her. Was she awake or asleep? The tide had fallen farther yet. A large purple starfish glided on the sand and paused close by. Many-hued little shells crept near and listened, and pearly Eolis, from a crystal pool at hand, lifted her crested head to listen also. The child rubbed her eyes, and looked about on every side, — the sand was real beneath her feet, the familiar sound of the water was surely in her ears, there were the stars above burning steadily. She was awake, she thought, though it was night; but when she looked at the fairy prince, she thought it was sunrise suddenly. He came near and took her hand, and as he did so all the sandpipers cried aloud in their dreams, and made their playmate tremble with mournful foreboding.

“Come,” he said, “I have sailed across the sea, to

show you what lies beyond the wonderful horizon. Come with me;" and without knowing how, she was sitting in the beautiful boat by his side, and all the fairy creatures were busy casting off the ropes, and trimming the sails, with song and shout, and as swiftly those shimmering sails ran up to the tops of the delicate masts, the south wind filled them; sudden wafts of music, fine and sweet, rose and fell, and out of the little cove swept the fleet of shells, rustling canvas, gleaming stars, and brilliant faces, and all. Rapidly they passed from sight, and then on the lonely beach the sandpipers cried more disconsolately, and the waves broke ever with a lonelier sound, for nevermore came that little spray sprite back to play with them again.

What became of her? Well, that I will tell you also. At first, she was listening to such a wonderful story that she quite forgot everything else; but, as they sailed and sailed, one by one the fairy crews disappeared, and still little Idleness and the fairy prince sailed on and on, till at last they came to the great world which had looked so beautiful to the child's eyes from afar,—all gold, and pearl, and rose-color. And of what do you think she found it was made, after all? Why, my dear children, only patchwork! Everybody was doing patchwork of one kind or another,—black patches and white, blue patches and gray,—and everybody was so busy that it was astonishing to witness. I do not mean to say that every-

body was sewing with needle and thread, but all were at work upon something; and she comprehended that while she had been dancing in the spray, wiser children had been learning all kinds of useful things, of which she knew nothing at all, and how much time she had lost!

At first it was wearisome enough, — like living in a big ant-hill, with all the ants rushing about pell-mell. And then all the trees, hills, and fields seemed to be crowding up to the windows for the express purpose of smothering the poor mermaid. There was n't half enough sky, and no water at all, to speak of; and everything was so stiff and still, except the hurrying people. The trees waved, but they could n't go sweeping off as the grand ships did over the sea, and as for the fields, they were well enough, but altogether too still; they never changed about like the shifting, musical, many-colored sea. And yet some of them were lovely, when the wind bowed all the tall white daisies toward her, like the crest of a breaking wave; better so than when they blushed with clover-bloom, or flamed in buttercups and dandelions. The brooks and rivers were good as far as they went, but there was so little of them! And if she liked the hills, it was because they seemed to her like huge, petrified waves, heaved solemnly against the sky. Alas for her great horizon! She pined for it night and day.

But gradually she began to get used to the ta-

life, and slowly, very slowly, she found out a secret worth all the beauty she had lost. As young people don't know it generally, I'll whisper it in your ear. This is it: that work is among the best blessings God gave the world; that to be useful and helpful, even in the smallest ways, brings a better bliss than all the delightful things you can think of, put together. And this bliss is within the reach of every human being. She was glad when she found it out for herself. And so now she does patchwork, to the end of her days,—patchwork in this case meaning all kinds of work under the sun, a little here, and a little there. You would never know now that she had been a spray sprite, and danced among the breakers, and talked and laughed with the loons, for she is like everybody else, except that, sleeping or waking, year after year, she keeps in her ears the sad, mysterious murmur of the sea, just like a hollow shell.

MADAME ARACHNE

MADAME ARACHNE sat in the sun at her door. From a spider's point of view she would have been considered a plump and pleasing person, but from a human standpoint she had, perhaps, more legs than are necessary to our ideal of beauty; and as for the matter of eyes, she was simply extravagant, having so many pairs she could see all round the horizon at once. She had built her house across the pane of a window in a lighthouse, and sat at her door, in all the pride of patiently awaiting flies. The wind from the south breathed upon her pretty web, and rocked her to and fro. Many tiny midges, small as pinheads, flickered and fluttered and stuck to the web. But Madame Arachne did not stir for them.

"Bah!" she said; "such small fry! Why can't a fly of proper size come this way?"

The sea made a great roaring on the rocks below, the sun shone, it was a lovely day. She was very content, but a little hungry. Suddenly a curious small cry or call startled her; it sounded as if some one said, "Yank, yank, yank!" "My goodness!" cried she; "what can that be?"

Then was heard a sharp tapping, which shook her with terror much more than the breeze had shaken her.

She started as if to run, when "Yank, yank, yank!" sounded again, this time close above her. She was not obliged to turn her head; having so many eyes, she saw, reaching over the top of the window, a sharp black beak and two round black eyes belonging to Mr. Nuthatch, who also was seeking his supper, wood-pecker fashion, and purposed to himself to take poor Mrs. Arachne for a tidbit. There was barely time for her to save her life. She precipitated herself from her door by a rope which she always carried with her. Down, down, down she went, till at last she reached the rock below; but Nuthatch saw, and swept down after her. Her many legs now served a good purpose, — she scampered like mad over the rough surface, and crept under the shingles that lapped over at the edge where the foot of the lighthouse met the rock, — and was safe. Nuthatch could n't squeeze in after her; he probed the crack with his sharp beak, but did not reach her; so he flew away to seek an easier prey. After a while, poor Madame Arachne crept out again, and climbed to her window, looking all about with her numerous eyes while she swung. "Ugh! — the ugly monster!" she whispered to herself, as she reached the pane where her pretty house had been built, — no vestige of it was left. He had fluttered about in every corner of the window, and with wings

and feet had torn the slight web all to pieces. Patiently Madame Arachne toiled to make a new one; and, by the time the sun had set, it was all finished, and swinging in the breeze as its predecessor had done. And now a kind fate sent the hungry web-spinner her supper. A big, blustering blue-bottle fly came blundering against the glass. Presto! Like a flash, Madame had pounced on him, with terrible dexterity had grabbed him and bound him hand and foot. Then she proceeded to eat him at her leisure. Fate was kind to the spider; but alas, for that too trustful fly! Presently she sought the centre of her web and put herself in position for the night. I suppose she was n't troubled with a great deal of brains; so it did n't matter that she went to sleep upside-down! She was still a little agitated by the visit of Mr. Nuthatch, but she knew he must have gone to roost somewhere, and so composed herself for slumber.

Ah, how sweet was the warm wind breathing from the sea; how softly the warm blush of the sunset lay on rock, and wave, and cloud! She heard a noise within the lighthouse, — it was the keeper lighting the lamps in the tower; she heard a clear note from the sandpiper haunting the shore below. “He does n't eat spiders,” said she; “there is some sense in a bird like that! He eats snails and sand-hoppers, who are of no account. One can respect a bird like that!” The balmy summer night came down, with its treas-

ures of dew and sweetness, and wrapped the whole world in dreams. Toward morning, a little mist stole in from the far sea-line, a light and delicate fog. The lighthouse sent long rays out into it through the upper air, like the great spokes of some huge wheel that turned and turned aloft without a sound. The moisture clung to the new-made web. "Bless me," cried Madame Arachne, looking out, "a sea-turn, all of a sudden! I hope I sha'n't catch a rheumatism in my knees." Poor thing! As she had eight legs, and two knees to each leg, it would have been a serious matter indeed!

At that moment, there came a little stifled cry, and a thump against the glass of the lantern high above her, and then a fluttering through the air, and a thud on the rock beneath. What was happening now? She shuddered with fright, but dared not move. She could not go to sleep again; but it was almost morning.

At last the pink dawn flushed the east, the light mist stole away with silent footsteps, and left the fair day crystal-clear. Arachne still clung to her web, which was beaded with diamonds left by the mist. She did not know that Lord Tennyson had written about such a web as hers in a way never to be forgotten. He was talking about peace and war, and he said:—

"The cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more."

Her web was only woven across a window-pane from sash to sash, but it shook its threaded tears in the wind, that morning of late summer, and was very beautiful to see; but not so beautiful as the poet's thought.

She wondered what could have happened, — what the sound could have been, which had frightened her in the night. She crept to the edge of the window-ledge and looked down, — 't was too far, she could not see. By her convenient rope, she swung herself down to the rock, and was startled at what she beheld. There lay her enemy, Nuthatch, stone-dead, with his pretty feathers all rumpled, in a pitiful plight indeed. He had seen the long ray from the lighthouse top and, dazzled, had flown toward it, taking it for sunrise, followed it with a rush, and struck his head against the clear and cruel glass. That was the end of poor Nuthatch!

“Well, well!” cried Madame Arachne, “upon my word, I’m glad you’re dead! Now I need n’t be afraid of you. But what a silly thing! That’s what all creatures do who have wings; — they flutter and flutter around a light till they are banged or burned to death. Better have nothing but legs. Who would want wings? Not I! No sensible person would.”

Such is spider wisdom.

She climbed her rope, hand over hand, and reached her airy dwelling. There she proceeded to bestir her-

self in the early morning. High in a corner chamber she wove a silken cocoon, white and satin-smooth, a shining cradle, snug and warm; and in it laid several hundred tiny round eggs of dusky pink, and left them there to hatch when they should be ready. Then she went down to her seat in the middle of her web, and watched the weather and hoped for flies.

She saw white sails on the sea, she saw white gulls in the air, she saw white foam on the rocks, as she sat in the sun. Days came, nights passed, winds blew, rains fell, mists crept in and out, and still she watched for flies, with more or less success; till at last out crawled a baby-spider to the air, and another, and another,—so small they were hardly to be seen,—till nearly all the eggs were hatched. They stretched their tiny legs, cramped from long confinement; they crept hither and thither, and wondered at the big world—of one window-pane!

“Good-morning, my dears,” said Madame Arachne,
“I hope I see you well!”

Every day, from the inside of the lighthouse, three pairs of childish eyes watched this interesting spider family. As the tiny ones grew larger, they began to build for themselves little webs in each corner of every pane; and each small dot of a spider put itself in the middle of its web, head downward, like the mother, and they all swung in the breeze and caught midges,—which were quite big enough for them.

"Did you ever see anything so comical?" said one child to another. "They all behave just like their mother. How quickly they learn how to live after they creep out of that little egg, which is so small we hardly can see it! How closely all those long legs must be folded up in such a tiny space! I wonder if all insects know so much as soon as they are hatched!"

"Insects!" said the older child, "but a spider is n't an insect at all! Don't you remember how papa read to us once that spiders belong to the Scorpion family?"

"Oh, a scorpion must be a horrid thing!" cried the younger, — "a *real* scorpion! I'm glad they don't live in this country. I like the spiders; they spin such pretty webs, and it's such fun to watch them. They won't hurt you if you don't trouble them; will they, sister?"

"Of course they won't," said the little girl's reassuring voice.

Madame Arachne heard them discussing her and her affairs. "They are good enough creatures," she said to herself. "They can't spin webs, to be sure, poor things! But then these three, at least, don't destroy them as that odious Nuthatch did. They seem quite harmless and friendly, and I have no objection to them — not the least." So the little spiders grew and grew and spun many and many a filmy web about the old white lighthouse for many happy days.

But late in the autumn, a party of merry birds, flying joyously through the blue heaven on their way

south, alighted to rest on the rock. They filled the air with sweet calls and pretty twitterings. Many of them were slim and delicate fly-catchers, exquisitely dressed in gray and black and gold and flame. Alas for every creeping thing! Snip! snap! went all the sharp and shining beaks, — and where were the spiders then? Into every crack and cranny the needlelike beaks were thrust; and when the birds flitted away, after a most sumptuous lunch, not a spider was visible anywhere. It was one grand massacre, — yet again Madame saved herself, behind a friendly shingle; and some days afterward the children saw her crawling disconsolately about her estate in the lighthouse window.

But the little island soon had another visitor in the shape of Jack Frost, Esq., who came capering over the dancing brine, and gave our poor friend so many pinches that she could only crawl into the snuggest corner and roll herself up to wait till the blustering fellow should take his departure.

"She's quite gone," said one of the children, as they looked for her one crackling cold day.

"Never mind," said the eldest. "Spring will wake her up and call her out again."

And so it did.

Now, would you like to know how I happen to have found out about Madame Arachne and her adventures? I will tell you, dear children. I was one of the little folk who watched through the old lighthouse window and saw them all.

CAT'S-CRADLE

"O COSETTE, you are the *dearest kitty!*!" And little Max, who spoke, laid his golden head against the soft fur of the big Maltese cat, and hugged her tight with both arms.

A gypsy fire of light driftwood sticks was sparkling and crackling on the hearth; the children were gathered about it, Robert and Rose, Lettice, Elinor, and little Max. The rain was falling merrily on the roof of the low, brown cottage where they had come to live for the summer. Mamma, with her work, sat in the corner of the sofa near.

"Well, how it does pour!" said Letty, going to the window. The rest followed her, and stood looking out. They saw the gray sea, calm and silvery, slowly rolling toward the gray sand, breaking in long, lazy lines of white foam at the edge of the beach. A few small boats were moored near; to the left, not far away, a cluster of fish-houses, old and storm-worn, their roofs spotted with yellow lichens, stood on the shore. There were no sails in sight, — only dim sea, dim sky, and pouring rain.

"We can't go out to-day at all!" said Rose.

"Not all the long day?" questioned Max wistfully.

"Oh, perhaps it will clear off by and by," Elinor, the elder, said. "Who knows? Never mind if it does n't, we can have a good time in the house; can't we, Rob?"

"Yes, we can!" Rob cried. "I'm going to make boats for us all, a whole fleet! Won't that be a good thing, mamma? And then, as soon as it clears off, we'll launch them and send them off to Spain. You find some stiff white paper, girls. Mamma will give us some; I'll go out to the shed for lumber to build my ships," and away he went. Mamma provided scissors and paper. Elinor turned back the rug to make a place for Rob to whittle; presently he returned with a basket of driftwood, bits of many sizes and shapes, some worn smooth as satin by the touches of millions of waves, having floated on the ocean, Heaven alone knows how long.

"Now, isn't this fun!" he said, as they all sat together round the basket, Rose and Lettice with the scissors shaping sails under his direction, while he proceeded to turn out of his pocket the fifty things, more or less, that go to make up the freight a boy generally carries; of course, the knife, being heaviest, was at the bottom. A roll of stout, brown twine caught Max's eye.

"Please, Rob, let me have it to play with, for reins to drive Rose," he begged; so Rob tossed it over to him where he sat curled up with his kitty.

"There it is, Maxie! Now, let's begin to name our boats, girls. I'm going to call mine the 'Emperor,' 'cause it's going to lead the fleet!"

"Mine shall be the 'Butterfly,'" said Rose.

"That's good! What for yours, Letty?"

"I think the 'Kittiwake' will be a good name for mine."

"Yes, that will do. And what shall yours be, Nelly?"

"Oh, the 'Albatross,' because he flies so fast without moving his wings!"

"That's fine! Now, Max, what are you going to call your boat?"

Max was turning over the bits of wood in the basket. Inside the edge he had just found a brown, woolly caterpillar. "Oh," he cried. "See! A pillow cat! A pillow cat!"

"You mean a caterpillar, dear," said Letty.

"Do let him call it a pillow cat, Letty dear," said mamma; "he isn't much more than my baby yet, you know."

"But you don't want your ship called the 'Pillow Cat,' do you, Max?" asked Rob. They all laughed, tried this name and that, but nothing seemed to suit Max, who said "No" to everything; so they left it to be decided afterward. They watched their ship-builder with great pride and interest, but after a while they grew tired.

"Let's play cat's-cradle with Max's string," Rose said to Letty at last, and they proceeded to try; but Rose did not know how, and Letty only half remembered, so they appealed to Rob.

"Do please leave off whittling a minute and show us how, Rob."

Being a good-natured brother, he threw down his knife and stood up before Letty while he showed her the ins and outs of the complicated web. Very soon she learned how to make it, then taught Rose, and they amused themselves for some time while Rob worked away, and Max played with his dear kitty, and mamma and Elinor were sewing and talking together. Soon as the "Butterfly" was finished, the girls rigged her with the square white paper sails, and she was "stowed" (as Bob nautically expressed it) on the mantelpiece, for safety. Then the "Emperor" was begun, but before it was half done, lunch was ready; still it rained, perpendicularly pouring. Papa had been busy in the study all the morning, but after lunch he sat with the children, taking Max upon his knee.

"I'll begin Max's boat," he said. "Now, mamma, won't you tell us a story? We can work so much faster, you know."

"Elinor is the story-teller of the family," mamma replied. "Let her try." So Elinor began. Rose curled up on the rug, Letty held Cosette, Max laid

his pretty head against papa's shoulder, and all watched the whittling while they listened to Elinor.

"Once upon a time," she began, and her pleasant voice went on and on; the rain pattered gently and steadily; the long surf whispered with a soft, hushing sound, and presently, before they knew it, Max was sound asleep. Papa laid him among the cushions by mamma's side and went back to his books; then they found Rose had fallen sound asleep too. But the rain went on, and the story, and the whispering rush of the water, till suddenly Rose laughed out in her sleep so loud that she waked, sat up, rubbed her eyes, and then began to laugh again.

"What *is* the matter, Rosy?" they asked her.

"Oh, such a funny dream," she said. "Such a queer dream. I thought I was standing down by the marsh where the cat-o'-nine-tails grow, you know;—the moon was just coming up over the water, yellow, and big, and round, and I thought it had such a funny face with two eyes that kept blinking and winking, first at me and then at the tall reeds; and suddenly I heard a rustling, and up the long stalks I saw a gray mother-cat climbing, and after her five little gray kittens,—oh, so pretty and so tiny. They had such hard work to climb, for the bending stalks were slippery,—and they bent more and more the higher the little cats climbed; but they kept on. One kitty outstripped the rest and almost reached the brown, heavy

reed-tops, when all at once I saw that the ends were hung with little cradles, — real cradles, with real rockers, — and the first thing I knew, that foremost kitty had jumped in and cuddled down in the nearest cradle, and there she swung, to and fro, up and down (for the wind was blowing, too), and she looked so pretty with her little ears sticking up and her bright eyes shining, as she watched the other kittens climbing after her, for there was a cradle for every one of them to rock in. Then when they were all in, it was so comical I laughed aloud, and that woke me. But I wish we had the kits and the cradles to play with here!"

"Cat's-cradle!" said Elinor; "why would n't that be a good name for Max's boat?"

"Why, yes," they cried; "would n't you like it, Max? Shall your boat be called the 'Cat's-Cradle'?"

"Yes," answered Max, who had waked and listened with interest to Rose's dream; "kitty shall go sail in her, rock — rock — on the water." So it was settled.

"Just look at the sun!" cried Letty, for a great glory suddenly streamed in from the west, where the sun was sinking toward the sea, and flooded the room with gold.

"Fair day to-morrow!" cried Rob. "All the fleet can start for Spain! — 'Cat's-Cradle' and all, for that is done, too;" and he ranged the little vessels in a row on the shelf. Mamma laughed to see her mantel

turned into a shipyard; and the children went to rest that night full of glad hopes for the morrow.

The day rose bright and fair. After breakfast they prepared to go down to the beach for their launch.

"Let's man all the boats," said Rob; "let's take Max's Noah's Ark and put passengers on board every one, out of the Ark."

"If Max is willing," suggested Elinor.

"Are you, Max?" asked Letty. "Oh, yes! We'll send Noah to Spain in the 'Cat's-Cradle'! That will be fun!"

"Are you willing? Yes?" and away she ran upstairs, and soon came back with the toy in her hand, shaking dogs, cats, elephants, and rats together with Noah and his family in hopeless confusion.

Cosette was rubbing her head affectionately against Max's stout little legs.

"Let's take the kitty, too; she wants to go," he said; and out they flocked together, Cosette following, all dancing and capering toward the low rocks where the fish-houses stood, to reach a small pebbly cove beyond, where the water was smooth as glass. Old Jerry, the fisherman, sat mending his net on the shore; he greeted them as they went skipping by, each with boat in hand.

"Fine mornin' for your launch," quoth he; "wind offshore and everything fair."

"Yes, they're all bound for Spain," said Rob in great glee. "Do you think they'll get there to-day?"

"Should n't wonder," answered Jerry with a smile. "You never know what may happen in this 'ere world."

Max stood with Cosette in his arms, watching his brother and sisters man the fleet.

"I think Father Noah ought to sail in the 'Emperor,' don't you?" asked Rob, "because he must lead the ships, you know. Shall he, Max? Oh, yes, he's willing! Then Mrs. Noah shall go in the 'Albatross,' and Ham in the 'Kittiwake', and Shem on board the 'Butterfly; ' and who shall go in the 'Cat's-Cradle,' Max?"

"I want to go myself!" was Max's unexpected reply.

"Oh, you dear baby! don't you see you're too big?" cried Rose.

"No — boat's too small," said Max. "Put Noah's kitty in — she's little enough."

"Well, she can go with Japhet," and they sought among the wooden beasts till Noah's kitty was found; then off started the tiny vessels together: first the "Emperor," with Father Noah standing up straight and fine in the stern; then the "Albatross," with Mother Noah; after them the three other boats, their stiff white sails shining in the sun and taking the wind bravely. The children watched them breathlessly as the small ships lifted over the ripples, making their way out of the quiet cove, till they felt the stronger

wind and began to sail rapidly away. For a while they kept quite near together, but at last they strayed apart, though still obeying the outward-blowing wind.

"Look at old Noah," cried Rob, "standing up so brave! Oh, he's a great commander!"

"Dear me, but see Mrs. Noah! She's fallen over!" cried Letty. "Poor thing! She must be frightened."

"No, she's only dizzy. There's so much more motion than there was in the Ark!"

A long time they stood watching till the little white sails were a mere shimmer on the water.

"When will they come back?" asked Max. "At supper time?"

"Not so soon, I'm afraid, Max dear."

"Well, to-morrow, then. Will they come back to-morrow?"

"I cannot tell."

"But I *want* them to come back," the little boy said, half crying. "I want to go and get them and bring them home."

"But, Max, it takes a long time to sail all the way to Spain," Rose explained. "You'll have to wait with patience till they are ready to come back."

Max's lip curled grievously. "I want my boat, my 'Cat's-Cradle,' and my Noah," he said.

"Now, Max, never mind! Come and see what Jerry is doing! He's building a fire of sticks, and he's going to mend his boat with tar. Just come and look at him!"

They drew the little brother away. For a while he was interested in Jerry's work, but soon his eyes turned wistfully again to the water.

"I see them!" he cried. "'Way, 'way off!"

The others looked; they could just see a glimmer of white in the blue; they could not really tell if it were a white gull's breast on the heaving brine, or their fitting skiffs.

"Now let them go, dear Max! We'll get some baskets and go after berries up beyond the pasture, and we'll find some flowers to bring home to mamma; that will be lovely; Cosette shall come too;" and Max, cheered up, took a hand of Rose and Letty and turned from the glittering blue sea.

"You go on," Rob said; "Nelly and I will get the baskets and follow you." So the three went up the scented slope together, through the sweet-fern and bayberry, where here and there a goldenrod plume was breaking into sunshine at the top, till they reached a big rock in a grassy spot, where they stopped to wait for the others. Cosette was put down in the grass, and ran off toward home as fast as she could. Max's grief came upon him afresh at this second loss.

"Now, don't fret, dear," cried Letty. "Where's your piece of string, sweetheart! Isn't it in your little pocket? Feel and see; I'll show you how to make a wonderful knot Jerry showed me."

Max's eyes brightened as he felt in his pocket for the twine.

"Now see," said Letty; "I take two pieces so, and I put this end round this way and through that way, and then over so, and round *so*; then you take these two ends in your hands and hold them loosely, and Rose takes the other two ends, and when I say, 'Now!' pull both together, and see what a tight square knot it makes! Now, you try, Max!"

Max took the string and the knot.

"I can *untie* it," he said; and forthwith began picking at it industriously with his little fingers till the ends began to loosen; he would really have accomplished the undoing, had not Elinor and Rob arrived with the baskets; then they began picking berries in earnest.

It was not long before they had their baskets full. They gathered early asters and yellow rudbeckia for mamma, and among the trees beyond the pasture they found the red wood-lilies burning like beautiful lamps in the green shade. When Max was tired, Elinor and Rob made a carriage for him, clasping each other's wrists with their crossed hands; so he rode home triumphant; and they trooped in together, weary, rosy, and happy with their treasures.

"My boat sailed away, mamma," said Max, as they sat at table.

"But all our boats went with it to keep it company, you know," said Letty.

"Yes, but I want to go after it and bring it home,"

nsisted Max; and again they had to divert his mind from his loss.

In the afternoon they went down to play on the banks as usual, Max's nurse, Molly, accompanying. Jerry's mended dory was floating in the shallow cove; they begged to be allowed to get into it, "just for fun," and the old man put them in, Cosette and all, or kitty went with them everywhere. They put Max in the bow with his cat in his lap, and rocked the boat gently to and fro.

"Oh, look at the white gull!" cried Letty, as one wept over them. "Look, Max! It is white as mamma's day-lilies in the garden!" But his eyes were fixed on the horizon line, where shining sails were dreaming far away in the sunshine.

"There they are! They're coming home!" he cried.
"No, Maxie; those are bigger boats than ours."

"But where have they gone, Rose? Let's go after them, now, in this boat. I can untie the rope," he cried, and he began to work on the knot which fastened the boat's "painter" to the bow. They let him work, since it seemed to amuse him so much, but they did not notice that he really made an impression on the large knot (which was not fastened very firmly) before they left the boat. When Jerry lifted him out, he whispered in the old man's ear, "To-morrow, may I go in your boat to find Noah and the 'Cat's-Cradle'?"

"Oh, yes, to-night, if you want to go," said Jerry.

"And Cosette, too?"

"Sartin! sartin!" laughed Jerry; so Max was comforted. "They're all gone," he said to Letty, looking out over the sea, "but we are going after them to bring them home, Cosette and I."

"Really, Max?"

"Yes, Jerry said so."

"Jerry should n't promise," Letty said; but she did not wish to grieve her little brother afresh, so she let the matter drop.

Molly gave him his supper and put him into his small white bed; tired and sleepy, he was soon in the land of dreams.

The rest of the family were at dinner. From the dining-room windows they saw the great disk of the full moon rising in the violet east, while the west was yet glowing with sunset. The sea was full of rose reflections; across the waves fell the long path of scattered silver radiance the moon sent down; a warm wind breathed gently from the land.

"Oh, papa," said Elinor, "let's go and ask Jerry to take us out sailing in the 'Claribel.' It is so lovely on the water!"

"Well, my dear, I'm willing, but mamma doesn't like sailing, you know."

"I'll stay with mamma. I don't like sailing either," said Letty. "We don't mind, do we, mamma?"

"Why, no," said mamma. "Do go! Letty and I will take a walk together. It is much too beautiful to stay indoors."

So papa with his little flock set out for Jerry and me "Claribel," while mamma and Letty made ready for their walk; but before leaving the house they went into the nursery to see that Max was asleep and comfortable.

"We are going out, Molly," said Mrs. Lambert to the nurse. "Take good care of Max."

"Sure and I always goes to look at him every little while, ma'am," said Molly.

"Yes, I know you do. Come, Letty, are you ready?" and they went out into the fragrant dusk together, strolling toward the pasture inland.

The boat meanwhile, with its happy crew, had been paddled away quite a distance from the warm land. A few faint clouds had gathered, which, floating slowly up the sky, helped to deepen the balmy darkness. The brown cottage was left quite alone except for lumbering Max, the servants, and Cosette who lay luxuriously napping on the parlor rug. Presently she awoke, stretched her long, lithe body, sat up, and looked about. All was dark and still. I suppose she wondered where everybody was; at any rate, she went out of the door, up the stairs, and, finding the nursery door ajar,—as careful Molly had left it, so that she might hear Max if he should call,—Cosette walked

in, jumped up on her little master's bed, and began purring affectionately and rubbing her whiskers against Max's rosy cheek. He half woke, and spoke out his dreams. "Cosette," he said, "now it's time to go and find Noah and all the boats, and the 'Cat' Cradle', and Noah's kitty; isn't it time, Cosette?"

He sat up and rubbed his eyes. The moon at that moment was clear and filled the room with light.

"Cosette," he whispered; "let's go, you and I, in Jerry's boat."

Cosette purred and cuddled close to him. He slipped out of his low bed and took the cat into his arms. Molly was having her tea downstairs; no one was nigh. His little bare feet made no noise on the stair; the front door was open; there was nothing to hinder them. A few minutes more and they were out on the sands. Nobody saw the small white figure with golden hair softly blown about, carrying the gray cat slowly down to the water. They reached the little cove and Jerry's dory. A battered log of driftwood lay half in and half out of the water. Max pushed the cat before him and climbed on this, and so crept over the edge of the boat into the bow.

"I can untie the rope, kitty, I know the way!" and he began to work at the knot. It was so loose that he soon had it untied.

"Why don't we sail away?" said the little boy, and forthwith began leaning from side to side, rocking

the boat as he had learned to do in the afternoon. Presently she began to move and slide off; the tide was ebbing, the wind blew from the land, both helped her away till she drifted slowly out of the cove, beyond the rocks and out to sea. Max was delighted.

Now, we're going to find them, kitty! Now, we'll bring them all back to Letty, and Rose, and Rob!"

The dory floated away into the dark. Nobody saw it, nobody knew. The wind over the water was cooler than on shore, and Max's little nightdress was thin. He looked about everywhere over the dark waves, and hivered.

"Where's mamma?" he said. "Shall we find the oats soon, Cosette?" Again the light clouds sailed across the moon. He shrank from the sight of the dark water; presently he slipped down into the deep bow of the boat, protected from the wind and hugging the warm kitty fast. "By and by we'll get to Noah," he said drowsily. The lulling sound of the light ripples and the rocking of the drifting dory soon sent him into dreamland again;—so they floated away on the wide sea, and no one knew anything about it.

Molly finished her tea, and went to the stairs to listen for any sound that might come from the nursery. All was still.

"Sure it's tired the darlin' do be," she said, "trampin' round on his two little futs the long day! He sleeps sound when he sleeps at all;" and she went

back to continue her chat with Betty the cook. She stayed longer than she thought; it was full half an hour before she crept upstairs to look at her pet. She was surprised to find the nursery door wide open. Entering hurriedly, she saw the little white bed empty and cold. "Max! Max, darlin'! where do ye be hidin' from Molly?" She ran from one room to another seeking him, calling till her voice brought the cook and the maid rushing upstairs to see what was the matter. "He's gone!" cried Molly. "Mother of Heaven! he's gone!" and she began to wail and cry like a banshee.

"Stop your deavin', Molly," cried the frightened Betty. "Sure and it's only downstairs he's gone. We'll find him below." They ran down. Here there, everywhere over the whole house they went not a trace of him could they find.

"Oh, it's kidnapped he is, sure! Oh, what'll do, what'll I do!" cried Molly, and she ran out-of-doors to meet Mrs. Lambert and Letty, who were coming up the path to the house.

"Oh, missis, have yez seen him?" she cried, half-distracted.

"Who, Molly?" cried Letty, and the mother's heart stopped beating as the maid answered, —

"The baby! Sure the baby's gone entirely. I can't find him in the whole house!"

"Molly! are you wild? What *can* you mean?"

Iax gone?" She flew upstairs, followed by Letty, umb with fear. There was the little empty bed, ith a dimple in the pillow where the golden head ad lain. Pale with anxiety, they sought him every- here, at last ran out of the house and up and down he sands, but never a sign of Max or Cosette could hey find.

Meanwhile, Jerry's whaleboat, the "Claribel," was making its way back, beating up toward the shore against the light and baffling wind with the happy party on board. The moon gave but a faint lustre hrough the light clouds, by which they could see the utlines of the land. The girls had turned up their leeves, and held their arms as deep down as they ould reach into the water to see the phosphorescence blaze at every movement, outlining their fingers in fire and rolling in foamy flame up to their elbows; the boat's keel seemed cutting through this soft, cold flame; it was wonderful and beautiful, and they never tired of watching it.

"I should be glad if the wind would freshen a little," their father said presently. "This is all very charming, but we are going to be late home for little folks, I'm afraid," and he drew Rose to his knee.

"Are n't you tired, little girl?"

"No, papa;" but she laid her head on his shoulder. "Shall we soon be there, now, papa?"

"I hope so," he replied. "Rob, what makes you so silent?"

"I don't know, father, whether I'm asleep a dreamin', or not, but it seems to me every momen' as if I heard Cosette mewin'. Now just keep st a moment all of you, and listen. There! did y hear? you have n't a cat on board the 'Claribel' the cuddy, have you, Jerry?"

"Why, no," replied Jerry, "but I've been thin ing I heard something queer myself."

"Father!" suddenly cried Rob, "what's that bla speck on the water down there?" He pointed to le ward. At the same time a faint sound, sharp enoug to pierce the breeze that blew against it, reached the ears.

"If 't was daytime, I should say 't was the gu cryin'," said Jerry, "but they don't fly nights."

"Is that a dory anchored, with somebody fishing?" asked Mr. Lambert.

"No, sir; whatever 't is, it's movin'. Shall we sheer off a little and run down and see what 't is?"

"Do," said Mr. Lambert. As the "Claribel" turned on her course, again the sharp cry came, this time quite clearly, to their ears.

"Somebody's got a cat somewhere, now that's satin'!" said Jerry. They all looked and listened eagerly, fixing their eyes on the dim black spec. The boat with a free wind sailed faster; soon they were near enough to distinguish the outline of a smal body sitting up on the broad seat in the stern of the dory.

"'T ain't big enough for a human critter," said Jerry.
"Sure 's you 're born, it 's a cat in a dory! How
pon earth did it get there?"

"I do believe it is Cosette!" said Rob.

Again the moonlight broke through the rifted cloud,
showing them plainly Cosette sitting upright; her
long, anxious, distressed mews were pitiful to hear.

"Upon my word, it *is* Cosette!" said Mr. Lambert.

"And that 's my dory," said Jerry, as he ran the
ailboat past the skiff, then, luffing to bring her along-
side, caught her by the gunwale, as they reached her,
and held her fast. Cosette stood up, and with a flying
eap landed in the midst of the astonished group.

"What 's that white thing in the bow?" cried
Elinor. "*Papa!*" she screamed, for the white thing
began to move, and a little voice said:—

"I 'm bery cold, papa"—

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Mr. Lambert. "*Max!*
Max, is it you?" as he snatched him out of the dory
and clasped him close in his arms, "with only your
nightdress on? All alone! Oh, *Max!* how did you
get there?"

Elinor sprang with a large shawl she had brought,
and wrapped it closely round him; she could not
speak, but put her arms round her father and little
brother and leaned her head down on Max's curly
pate.

"My little boy! My dear little boy!" Mr. Lam-

bert said, over and over, and he gathered him close and held him fast, as if he never could let him go again.

"Oh, Max!" cried Elinor at last, seeking for his bare cold feet under the shawl and cherishing them in her warm hands, "how *did* you get there?"

"We did n't reach to Noah," Max said in his sweet voice. "We went to find the 'Cat's-Cradle,' — Cosette and I, — and Noah and all the boats, and we could n't see them, and I was cold, and Cosette cried and I wanted mamma, and we could n't find anything, and I want my Noah;" the little story ended in a sob.

"Oh, you poor little darling," cried Rose.

"If it had not been for Cosette, we never should have known anything about it," said Rob.

"I wonder if they have missed him at home," said Elinor. "Poor mamma! Oh, papa, I wish we could sail faster!"

It seemed a long time before the boat neared the landing so they could disembark. Some time before they reached it they saw dark figures up and down the beach, and guessed that the poor mother was wildly searching for her boy. They shouted as soon as they could make themselves heard: "He's here! He's safe!"

It was not long before she had her treasure in her happy arms, clinging about her neck, while the other children clustered eagerly round father and mother,

alking, laughing, crying, wondering, and rejoicing,
at once, as they trooped into the house together.

"Cosette!" they cried, after Max had been safely
picked up in his little bed once more and the little
cat moved into mamma's room, close at her side,—
oh, Cosette! if it had not been for you, we never,
ever, *never* should have found our dear Max again!
Oh, Cosette, you are the best and dearest kitty in the
world!"

THE BLACKBERRY-BUSH

A LITTLE boy sat at his mother's knees, by the long western window, looking out into the garden. It was autumn, and the wind was sad; and the golden elm leaves lay scattered about among the grass, and on the gravel path. The mother was knitting a little stocking; her fingers moved the bright needles; but her eyes were fixed on the clear evening sky.

As the darkness gathered, the wee boy laid his head on her lap, and kept so still that, at last, she leaned forward to look into his dear round face. He was not asleep, but was watching very earnestly a blackberry-bush, that waved its one tall dark-red spray in the wind outside the fence.

"What are you thinking about, my darling?" she said, smoothing his soft, honey-colored hair.

"The blackberry-bush, mamma; what does it say? It keeps nodding, nodding to me behind the fence; what does it say, mamma?"

"It says," she answered, —

"I see a happy little boy in the warm, fire-lighted room. The wind blows cold, and here it is dark and

onely; but that little boy is warm and happy and safe
t his mother's knees. I nod to him, and he looks at
ne. I wonder if he knows how happy he is!

"See, all my leaves are dark crimson. Every day
hey dry and wither more and more; by and by they
will be so weak they can scarcely cling to my branches,
and the north wind will tear them all away, and
nobody will remember them any more. Then the
snow will sink down and wrap me close. Then the
snow will melt again, and icy rain will clothe me, and
the bitter wind will rattle my bare twigs up and down.

"I nod my head to all who pass; and dreary nights
and dreary days go by. But in the happy house, so
warm and bright, the little boy plays all day with
books and toys. His mother and his father cherish
him; he nestles on their knees in the red firelight at
night, while they read to him lovely stories, or sing
sweet old songs to him, — the happy little boy! And
outside I peep over the snow, and see a stream of
ruddy light from a crack in the window-shutter, and I
nod out here alone in the dark, thinking how beautiful
it is.

"And here I wait patiently. I take the snow and
the rain and the cold, and I am not sorry, but glad;
for in my roots I feel warmth and life, and I know
that a store of greenness and beauty is shut up safe in
my small brown buds. Day and night go again and
again; little by little the snow melts all away; the

ground grows soft; the sky is blue; the little birds fly over, crying, "It is spring! It is spring!" Ah! then, through all my twigs I feel the slow sap stirring.

"' Warmer grow the sunbeams, and softer the air
The small blades of grass creep thick about my feet
the sweet rain helps swell my shining buds. More
and more I push forth my leaves, till out I burst in
a gay green dress, and nod in joy and pride. The
little boy comes running to look at me, and cries, "Oh,
mamma! the little blackberry-bush is alive, and beau-
tiful and green. Oh, come and see!" And I hear,
and I bow my head in the summer wind; and every
day they watch me grow more beautiful, till at last I
shake out blossoms, fair and fragrant.

"' A few days more, and I drop the white petals
down among the grass, and, lo! the green tiny berries.
Carefully I hold them up to the sun; carefully I
gather the dew in the summer nights; slowly they
ripen; they grow larger and redder and darker, and at
last they are black, shining, delicious. I hold them
as high as I can for the little boy, who comes dancing
out. He shouts with joy, and gathers them in his
dear hand; and he runs to share them with his mother,
saying, "Here is what the patient blackberry-bush
bore for us: see how nice, mamma!"

"' Ah! then indeed I am glad, and would say, if I
could, "Yes, take them, dear little boy. I kept them
for you, held them long up to sun and rain to make

hem sweet and ripe for you;" and I nod and nod in all content, for my work is done. From the window he watches me, and thinks, "There is the little blackberry-bush that was so kind to me. I see it and I love it. I know it is safe out there nodding all alone; and next summer it will hold ripe berries up for me to gather again." "

Then the wee boy smiled, and liked the little story. His mother took him up in her arms, and they went out to supper, and left the blackberry-bush nodding up and down in the wind; and there it is nodding yet.

BERGETTA'S MISFORTUNES

OLD Bergetta lay asleep on the doorstep in the sun. Bergetta was a cat of an inquiring mind. Now an inquiring mind is a very good thing if it is not too largely developed; but Bergetta's was of so lively a nature that she was continually led into difficulties thereby. This morning she was having a beautiful nap in the spring sunshine. Her two little white fore paws were gathered in under her chin, and she had encircled herself with her tail in the most compact and comfortable way. Now and then she lifted her sleepy lids and winked a little, and perhaps she saw, or did not see, the bright blue ocean at the end of the rocky slope before her, and the outline of Appledore Island across the strip of sparkling water, and the white sails here and there, and the white clouds dreaming in the fresh and tender sky of spring.

It was very pleasant. Bergetta at least enjoyed the warmth and quiet. Her three companion cats were all out of her way at that moment. She forgot their existence. She was only conscious of the kindly rays that sank into her soft fur and made her so very sleepy and comfortable.

Presently a sound broke the stillness, very slight and far off, but she heard it, and pricked up her pretty pink-lined ears and listened intently. Two men, bearing a large basket between them, came in sight, approaching the house from the beach. The basket seemed heavy; the men held each a handle of it, and very silently went with it round to the back entrance of the house.

Bergetta settled her head once more upon her folded paws, and tried to go to sleep again. But the thought of the basket prevented.

What could be inside that basket?

She got up, stretched herself, and lightly and noiselessly made her way round the house to the back door and went in. The basket stood in the middle of the floor, and the three other cats sat at a respectful distance from it near each other, surveying it doubtfully.

Bergetta wasn't afraid; she went slowly towards it to investigate its contents, but when quite close to it she became aware of a curious noise going on inside of it—a rustling, crunching, dull, clashing sound which was as peculiar as alarming. She stopped and listened; all the other cats listened. Suddenly a queer object thrust itself up over the edge, and a most extraordinary shape began to rise gradually into sight. Two long, dark, slender feelers waved about aimlessly in the air for a moment; two clumsy claws grasped the rim of the basket, and by their help a hideous

dark bottle-green-colored body patched with vermilior bristling with points and knobs, and cased in hard strong, jointed armor, with eight legs flying in all directions, each fringed at the foot with short yellowish hair, and with the inner edges of the huge misshapen claws lined with a row of sharp, uneven teeth opening and shutting with the grasp of a vise,—this ugly body rose into view before the eyes of the astonished cats.

It was a living lobster.

Dear children, those among you who never have seen a living lobster would be quite as astonished as the cats were at its unpleasant aspect. When you see these shell-fish they have been boiled and are bright scarlet all over, and you think them queer and grotesque, perhaps, they do not seem frightful; but a living lobster is best described by the use of the much abused word *horrid*. It seems a mixture of spider and dragon. Its jet-black shining eyes are set on short stalks and project from its head, and the round opaque balls turn about on their stems and survey the world with a hideous stolidity.

It has a long, jointed tail, which it claps together with a loud clash, and with which it contrives to draw itself backward with wonderful rapidity.

Such was the hard and horny monster that raised itself out of the basket and fell with a loud noise all in a heap on the floor before Bergetta. She drew

ack in alarm, and then sat down at a safe distance to observe this strange creature. The other cats also sat down to watch, farther off than Bergetta, but quite as much interested.

For a long time all was still. The lobster, probably either shocked by its fall, lay just where it had landed. Inside the basket a faint stirring and wrestling andashing was heard from the other lobsters, — that was all. Very soon Bergetta felt herself becoming extremely bored with this state of things. She crept little nearer the basket.

"I need n't be afraid of that thing," thought she, "it does n't move any more."

Nearer and nearer she crept, the other cats watching her, but not stirring. At last she reached the lobster hat in its wrath and discomfort sat blowing a cloud of rainbow bubbles from its mouth, but making no other movement. Bergetta ventured to put out her paw and touch its hard shell. It took no notice of this, though it saw Bergetta with its queer eyes on stilts, which it wheeled about on all sides to "view the prospect o'er."

She tried another little pat, whereat the lobster waved its long antennæ, or feelers, that streamed away over its back in the air, far beyond its tail.

That was charming! Bergetta was delighted. The monster was really playful! She gave him another little pat with her soft paw, and then coquettishly

boxed his ears, or the place where his ears ought be. There was a boding movement of the curiously shelly machinery about his mouth, an intricate network all covered with the prismatic bubbles he had blown in his wrath, but he was yet too indifferent to mind anything much.

Bergetta continued to tease him. This was fun. First with the right and then with the left paw she gave him little cuffs and pushes and pats which moved him no more than a rock. At last he seemed to become suddenly aware that he was being treated with somewhat more familiarity than was agreeable from an entire stranger, and began to move his ponderous front claws uneasily.

Still Bergetta continued to frisk about him, till he thrust out his eight smaller claws with a gesture of displeasure, and opened and shut the clumsy teeth of the larger ones in a way that was quite dreadful to behold. "This is *very* funny," thought Bergetta. "I wonder what it means!" and she pushed her little white paw directly between the teeth of the larger claw, which was opening and shutting slowly. Instantly the two sides snapped together with a tremendous grip, and Bergetta uttered a scream of pain, — her paw was caught as in a vise and cut nearly through with the uneven toothed edge.

Alas, alas! Here was a situation. In vain she tried to get away; the lobster's claw clasped her deli-

ate paw in a grasp altogether too close for comfort. Crying with fear and distress, Bergetta danced about all over the room; and everywhere Bergetta danced the lobster was sure to go too, clinging for dear life; up and down, over and across, they went in the wildest kind of a jig, while all the other cats made themselves as small as they could in the remotest corners and watched the performance with mingled awe and consternation. Such a noise! Bergetta crying and the lobster clattering, and the two cutting such capers together! At last some one heard the noise, and coming to the rescue thrust a stick between the clumsy teeth and loosened the grip of the merciless claw; and poor Bergetta, set at liberty, limped off to console herself as best she might.

For days she went limping about, so lame she could hardly creep round the house. When at last she began to feel a little better, she strayed one day into the same room, and seeing what she rightly guessed to be a pan of milk on the table, jumped first into a chair, and then up on the table to investigate. Naughty Bergetta! Yes; the pan was full of milk not yet skimmed. How luscious! She did not wait for anybody's permission, but straightway thrust her pink nose into the smooth, creamy surface. Now it was washing day, and just under the edge of the table, behind Bergetta, on the floor, a tub full of hot suds had been left. She lifted up her head after her first

taste of the cream — how nice it was — oh, horr what did she see! Just opposite her on the table another lobster with its long feelers bristling; it been boiled, by the way, but of course Bergetta co not know this tranquilizing fact. Bright scarlet, w its dull dark eyes pointed straight at her, it dawn upon Bergetta's terrified vision.

So eager she had been to look into the milkpa she had not discovered it before, and now her frig was so great that she gave one leap backwards a fell, splash! into the tub of warm suds.

Good heavens, what a commotion! With eye ears, nose, and mouth full of soapy foam, she crawled out of it and, more dead than alive, ran to the do and forth into the cold, leaving a long stream of sud on the floor in her wake. The wind blew throug her soaked fur and chilled the marrow of her bones.

Poor Bergetta! All the other cats came round h and stared at her with astonishment; and I'm afraid if cats ever do laugh, they certainly laughed at Be getta when she told them her morning's experience.

I don't think she ever coqueted with a lobste again or tried to steal milk from the pan, but we mewing about, rubbing her cheek against the kin little cook's foot till she gave her all a cat could wish.

And let us hope she escaped any more such dir disasters during the rest of her life.

SOME POLITE DOGS

IT was a lovely day in autumn. Little Lotty, the curly terrier, was asleep at my feet in the warm patch of September sunshine that lay on the floor. I had been sitting still a long time, so busy with my work that I had thought of nothing else. Looking up at last at the crimson hollyhock that stood, tall and splendid, outside the window, I caught a glimpse of the blue sea beyond, and the clear, warm sky, and realized how beautiful the afternoon had grown.

“Come, Lotty, wake up!” I cried to the little dog; “let’s go for a walk.”

Lotty jumped up, wide awake in an instant, and barking like mad with delighted expectation, as all her kind are wont to do at such a prospect. I gathered my sketching paraphernalia together, and, calling the maid to help me, I set out down the grassy slope to the sea’s margin, which sparkled and flashed, edged with the flood-tide’s lazy surf, hardly more than a stone’s throw from the door. Lotty, in an ecstasy, frisked, barking wildly, before and behind me, like a small hurricane of joy. Down the field through the bars, into the cart-path for a few steps, — wild rose-

bushes bright with scarlet haws on either side, — across the coarse sea grass and rough pebbles at the top of the beach, out at last upon the beautiful level strand of gray sand, smooth and hard as a floor, half a mile long, and curved like the crescent of the new moon. We traversed one fourth of its distance, then I ranged my umbrella and my easel, and sat down ready for a good time. Lotty came to anchor likewise, sitting bolt upright on the sand, eyed me curiously from under her comical frowsy locks.

"Well, my dear," I said, "what do you think of it?"

With a shake of the head and a wag of the tail, she crept close to my feet and lay down, as if she meant to make the best of it, at any rate. I proceeded to begin my sketch. But the place was so enchanting on every side so beautiful, I found it hard to do anything more than to look and to love everything I saw, for a long time. The sea was the most delicious turquoise blue, and where it ran up over the shallows, the color melted into transparent emerald, the long, slow billows lifted themselves lazily and rolled in with soft rustle and whisper, almost too lazy to roll at all. When the foam sparkled at the edge of the sand, kelp and weeds were scattered in broken lines of rich brown, dull purple, crimson, and olive green. Far away a few sails were dreaming; a group of snowy gulls rose and fell on the long swell of the ocean close at hand.

the left, tall marsh-grass came down to the top of beach in streaks of yellow, red-brown, and ripeen, with patches of crimson samphire beginning to w in the rockier places; all about me were the wild ebushes with their scarlet berries. I turned away m the water and looked up to the house I had left; red roofs and dull yellow-green walls steeped in sunshine, — rich and deep in color, — the vines l flowers about it, and the huge old elm in front it, the broad fields and mellowing woods, seemed so iceful and happy that I spoke aloud, “How heavy it is!”

Lotty perked up her head and looked at me. ughing at her funny expression, I turned to my etch and began working in earnest. The crickets amered pleasantly, the sweet sad cry of myriad goldches among the drying sunflower stalks and weeds unded incessantly; a crow cawed now and then, a ll high aloft in the blue uttered a harsh cry which e distance softened; a little beach-bird flew piping ong the sand. Lotty pricked up her ears.

“No, no, my dear!” I cried. “You are not to run ter any little bird whatever. Stay here and behave urself like a good dog;” for she had jumped up, d was already starting away to chase the feathered eature. With a very aggrieved and reproachful ex- eession she returned and sat down a few feet from e. But I only continued to laugh at her, and went

on with my painting, presently becoming so engrossed in it that I forgot she was there.

Some time passed. Suddenly a small paw thrust into my paint-box, and there was poor Lotty standing on her hind feet looking at me, as much as to say:—

“Oh dear, I’m bored to death. Why don’t we take a walk? Why have you planted yourself where you are doing nothing at all? Why don’t we go home, if we can’t go to walk? Oh dear, oh de—”

And she actually began to cry.

“Well, go home! you little goose,” I cried, greatly amused. “I don’t want you to stay!”

She left me, went a little way toward the house, then turned back and looked at me, whining and crying. Suddenly she came running and cuddled down again affectionately, as if she thought, “Well, sorry you’re such an idiot, but I won’t desert you though you do behave in this extremely foolish and unreasonable manner.”

So she lay patiently watching me from under her tangled shock of hair till I began to put up my brushes and made ready to depart.

The sun was nearing the western horizon in a golden glory as I shouldered my easel and took my way toward home, Lotty dancing with delight. I could not call the little maid to help me back, so I arranged the things as well as I could. I had not a regu-

tching outfit, and my long easel, though light, was
her difficult to carry; but I put my head through
V end, resting the two legs on my shoulders. I
also to carry a small chair, a large umbrella, my
tching-block, a tin pail in which I had brought
sh water, and over my left arm I hung a leather
g containing paint-boxes, brushes, etc. This was
ite heavy, and the whole load was as much as one
son could take; but I had not far to go, so trudged
wly along till I turned from the beach into the
en field that sloped from the house to the sea;
tty all the while capering and barking, rejoicing
it I had regained my senses at last. Her noise was
sently heard by the other dogs, which joined in the
orus afar off, and I saw appear at the upper edge
the field the two great St. Bernards, Champer-
wne and Nita, looming large against the sky. They
pped, gazing at us from the distance, as if taking
the situation; then in a moment they began to rush
wn toward us with long, loping canter, and knowing
eir affectionate impetuosity I said to myself :—

“Now I am lost! they will come full tilt against
e and all these traps, and I shall be a total wreck.”

Amused, and more than half dreading the onset, I
ood still and waited, admiring the magnificent, tawny,
on-colored creatures as they swept toward me, their
eautiful eyes beaming with intelligence, and all their
otions full of grace.

Suddenly the great dog Champernowne, as he reached me, stopped perfectly still without touching me, and before I knew what he was going to do, stood upright on his hind feet, as tall as myself, quickly slipped his under jaw through the handles of the bag which swung on my arm, and with the grace and courtesy of a grand duke, nothing less, gently and firmly drew it off, and turning, proceeded decorously up the path that led to the house, bearing it with the utmost care.

Astonished and delighted, I cried, "Bravo, Champ! Good dog! fine fellow! You saw I needed help, and you gave it like a gentleman, did n't you? But who would have thought you had so much sense?" The Nita, hearing all these praises lavished on her comrade, wished to have her share also; and joining Champ she too seized hold of the bag, and both together trotted side by side all the way to the house, where they arrived some time before I reached it, and where I found them faithfully keeping guard over my property on the threshold.

"Well, you are certainly the very handsomest, best and dearest dogs in the whole world!" I cried, as I opened the door and allowed them to crowd into the pleasant room, Lotty and two or three of the small dogs accompanying them with much frisking and barking. But Champ and Nita, appreciating to the utmost the importance of the occasion and the magnitude of

favor extended to them, took their seats on the
earth before the open fireplace with the greatest dig-
it. This was the summit of delight to them, to be
permitted to sit in the house before the fire and enjoy
society of their human friends, — a favor not too
often accorded them. A handful of driftwood had
been kindled on the hearth to take off the chill of the
evening fast closing in. Presently they spread their
bulks out on the rug before it in blissful satisfac-
tion, while I patted their heads and stroked their long
tails, and told them how I admired them, how proud I
was of them, till their eyes shone with delight, and
they fairly laughed for joy!

THE BEAR AT APPLEDORE

MR. BRET HARTE once told so charming a story about a bear, dear children, that I hesitate about telling you mine — which, indeed, is hardly a story at all; but perhaps you may like to hear what I have to tell.

Our bear came from Georgia when he was a tiny baby-bear; but he was not nice and soft and shiny like Mr. Harte's bear, — he was rusty and brown and shaggy and rough, and he looked askance at everybody out of his little eyes, that were as black as beads. I dare say he did not find it at all agreeable to come all the way from Georgia to the Isles of Shoals; and I am sure he did not find it pleasant after he arrived at his destination. He was tethered to a stick in a grassy space in front of the house, and the children played with him, morning, noon, and eve, one whole long summer. Alas! I fear he was often weary of his brief life, and would have been glad never to have been born. For, I am sorry to say, there were many naughty and thoughtless children among those who played with him, — unkind boys who poked at him with sticks and rolled him over and over in his bed.

ness, and teased and tormented him till it was
ost too much to be borne. The little girls were
ler; one especially I remember, who used to hold
in her arms as if he had been a big kitten, and
his dusky head on her shoulder, and put her cheek
n against his shaggy crown so tenderly, and sit
king to and fro on the grass with him hours at a
e. And often after she went to bed at night, I
ld hear her sighing out of the fullness of her heart,
h, that dear, *dear bear!*"

Well, the poor little creature endured his captivity
the eighth day of September, when there came a
nendous storm, with a wind from the south, which
neither more nor less than a hurricane. Windows
re blown in, buildings blown down, shingles ripped
roofs in flying flocks, — there was a fine tempest!
great copper-colored arch spanned the black sky at
ht o'clock in the evening; the sea lifted itself up
flung itself, white with fury, all over the island;
in the midst of the tumult the little bear disap-
red. Nobody thought of him, there was such a
fusion, everybody trying to save themselves from
fearful wind that had smashed the windows and
ken into the houses and was destroying everything,
spite of all we could do. Terror probably gave the
by-bear strength; he tugged wildly at his chain, it
oke, and he fled away through the dark, and when
e morning came we could not find him anywhere.

Fortunately, the gale only lasted a few hours, and at sunrise next day the sea was calm, except just about the rocks, where it rolled in tremendous breakers and cast clouds of diamond drops up toward the sky. A fishing-schooner had been wrecked at the south side of the island; I went over to look at her. It was not cheerful to see her crushed hull heaving helplessly up and down, and the poor fishermen sadly picking up here and there fragments of ropes, rigging, and fishing-gear which the awful sea had spared them; so I wandered away along the shore, and at last sat down on the edge of a high cliff and admired the great gleaming, sparkling floor of the ocean and the wonderful billows that shattered themselves in splendor between me and the sun. I pushed with my foot a bit of stone over the brink of the crag, and heard it fall below; but, at the same time, I heard another a'm quite an unexpected sound, — a noise hardly to b'described, something between a hiss and a whistle which came up to me from the gorge below. I kn'ed at once it could be nothing but the bear, and lean'e over and looked down. Sure enough, there he w'as a black heap curled up on a shelf of rock just below me, a few feet out of reach. He looked so comfortable, for it was the sunniest, cosiest nook, and litt'l vines of scarlet pimpernel trailed about him, arh plumes of goldenrod waved out of clefts in the rock and a tall mullein stood up still and straight beside

him, its head heavy with thick-set seed-vessels. I was surprised to see him, and very glad, as you may imagine; so I called out in the most engaging tones, ‘Good-morning, my dear; I’m very glad to see you!’”

I am pained to say, he looked up at me with an expression of intense cunning and unlimited defiance, and uttered again that shrill, suspicious half hiss, half whistle, which being interpreted might signify “Malediction!” So fierce he looked and savage, with that distrustful sidelong leer out of his black eyes, he was far from being an agreeable object to look at; and as I could not carry him home alone, or even capture him, I was obliged to leave him alone in his glory. But I made a little speech to him over the cliff edge before going away, in which I sympathized with his sorrowful state. “If I only could have had you for my own, poor little bear, you should not have been teased and plagued and had your temper spoiled. Don’t cherish resentment against me, I beg of you! If you ’ll only stay here till I come back, I ’ll bring you something to eat, and lumps of sugar, my dear.” And so I went away and left him snarling. But when I went back he had disappeared, and, though we sought for him everywhere, we did not see him again for nearly seven months. I was sure he was alive all the time, snugly stowed away in some deep crevice, sucking his paws, perhaps, which I had been told was a favorite pursuit of bears in the winter season. But

my belief was scorned and flouted by the rest of the family. "What!" they cried, "you think that little creature could live in this zero weather so many weeks, so many months, with nothing to eat? Of course he is frozen to death long ago!" But I believed him to be alive all the same; and I was not surprised when, one evening in April, while the sky was warm and crimson with sunset, there rose a cry outside the house, "The bear! the bear!" and from the window I saw him, grown twice as large as he had been in the autumn, clumsily climbing over a stone wall near by. All the men about the house gave chase; but he plunged bravely over the rocks and suddenly disappeared, as a drop of water soaks into the ground, in a large seam in the side of the hill. There they found his cave, all strewn with bones and the feathers of fowls. They could not dislodge him that night; but in the morning they made a business of it, and at last brought him down to the house with a rope around his neck, a most reluctant and indignant quadruped. As there were no children then to tease him, he led a peaceful life for two months, and I tried by the most persevering kindness and attention to make his days less unhappy. I led him about from place to place, selecting new spots in which to fasten him, and feeding him with everything I knew he liked. I even brought him into the house, though he was as large as a Newfoundland dog, and spread a mat for him in

e corner; but his temper had really been hopelessly
ured in his youth, and though I knew he was de-
hted in the depths of his heart when he saw me
ning with his beloved lumps of sugar, he never
ld refrain from lifting up the corners of his mouth
that ugly snarl, and uttering his distrustful hiss,
I became quite discouraged. At last he broke his
ain again, and disappeared a second time. All
nmer he kept himself hidden by day, but crept
t after sunset, foraging; and he was the terror of
the mothers who came to Appledore, and the chil-
en were watched and guarded with the greatest care,
t he should find one and run away with it. But
ere was n't really any reason for so much alarm.
e poor bear was quite as much afraid of human
ings as they could be of him.

Summer passed and winter came again, and he
ried himself once more in the cave on the hillside
d slept till spring. But when he emerged for the
cond time, behold, he had waxed huge and terrible
see. With difficulty he was secured, and it was
cided that now he was really dangerous and must be
sposed of in some way. About a mile and a half
om Appledore lies a little island called Londoners,
en occupied by a foreigner, who lived there with
s family. This man was found willing to take care
the bear; a price was agreed upon for his care and
ep, and he was tied and put into a boat and rowed

over to his new home one pleasant day in early summer, and there left and forgotten by the inhabitants of Appledore. But in August I went over to Londoners one delicious afternoon, to gather the wild pink morning-glories that grew there in great abundance. I found them running all over the rocks and bushes, up elder and thistle stalks, and I carefully untwisted their strong stems and hung one vine after another over my shoulders till they fell down like a beautiful green cloak to my heels, for by carrying them in that way there was no danger of crushing or injuring the buds and rosy bells that still were open, though it was afternoon. The cool sea air prevents their withering and closing as they do on the mainland, and they keep open all day. I was going toward the beach with my burden, when suddenly I came upon the bear. Oh but he was a monster! He gave a savage growl when he saw me, an indescribable sound of hatred and wrath, and his eyes glowed red and angry. You may be sure I started back out of his reach in a flash! He was fastened by a heavy chain to a small stake he had worn the green grass dry and dead as far as he could pace; he was huge, heavy, horrid. I came away from him as fast as I could. As I passed near the little shanty, there ran out from the door, and stood directly in my path, a poor little girl six or seven years old. She was dressed in a flaming pink calico gown, and over her shoulders tumbled a thicket of

all carrot-red hair, which looked as if it had never seen a comb, — so dry, so rough, so knotted and tangled it was. She had small pale blue eyes; and when she opened her mouth and uttered some words which I vainly strove to understand. Still she kept repeating her incantation, over and over, with the same monotonous tone, till I really began to wonder if she were not some funny little gnome sprung up out of the earth at my feet. I looked about; behind me I touched the dark bulk of the angry bear, before me in the distance I saw my friends pushing off the boat and making ready to depart. Suddenly, my ears having grown accustomed to the savage syllables of the strange being, it flashed on me that she was saying, "Five cents for looking at the bear! — five cents for looking at the bear!" precisely as if she were a machine that could do nothing else; and she never stopped saying it till I broke into hearty laughter, and answered her, "My dear Miss Caliban, I have seen the bear before! I didn't come to look at the bear; and beside, I haven't brought any money with me, or I would give you some," upon which she turned and hopped back with a motion and clumsiness more like a large pink toad than a human being. Great was everybody's amusement at the idea of taxing the public for "looking at the bear." All who landed at Londoners Island, it seemed, were obliged to pay five cents for that privilege!

But the huge fellow was brought back to Appledore in September, and then his enormous strength and enormous appetite made him anything but an agreeable addition to the family. Every night, when it was quite dark and still, and all the inmates of the house asleep, he prowled about, seeking what he might devour. Bolts and bars were nothing to him; such little impediments as windows he minded not in the least, but calmly lumbered through them, taking sash, glass, and all as he came. Then he made off with everything he could find in the way of provender, and kept himself hidden all day, safely out of sight of men. One night the family had retired early, and all were wrapped in dreams. It was between ten and eleven o'clock, and dark and moonless, when he stole softly beneath the windows of the store-room, where were kept barrels of beef, pork, and lard, and molasses most tempting. He climbed to one of the low windows and set his mighty shoulder against it. Crash! it gave way, and down he plunged, making noise enough to wake the dead. Two women were sleeping above in that part of the house, but they were too frightened to leave their rooms and call assistance; so they lay and trembled while our four-footed friend made himself quite at home below. Oh, but he had a splendid time of it! He extricated great wedges of pork to carry off to his den; he wallowed into the top of the hogshead of lard till he must have been a melting spectacle; he worried the faucet out of the molasses

ask and set the thick, sweet stream running all over the floor, and then rolled in it till he must have been sugar-coated quadruped indeed. Never was a bear in such a paradise! He made expeditions to his den through the broken window, carrying off nearly a barrel of pork, and spent the greater part of the night in that blissful lake of molasses. But when the morning dawned and the state of things below was investigated, great was the wrath and consternation in Appledore. What was to be done? Evidently this was too expensive a pet to be kept on a desert island; at this rate, he would soon dispose of all the provisions, and most likely finish off with the inhabitants in default of anything better! A dreadful decree went forth, — that bear must die! He was, indeed, too dangerous in his fearful strength to be allowed to live. But to find him, — there was a difficulty! One of the men was shingling on the highest roof; he looked about him, and afar off, curled in a green, turf-y hollow, he saw the large, dark mass of Bruin's body lying, like the Sybarite he was, steeping himself in sunshine, after his night's orgy in the store-room. Somebody was sent out with a rifle-pistol, and before he knew that danger was near, the sun had ceased to shine for that poor bear. It was so instantaneous he hardly felt his death, and I was glad to know that, at last, all his troubles were over; but I was sorry he had ever left the wilds of Georgia to take up his abode with us at the Isles of Shoals.

PEGGY'S GARDEN, AND WHAT GREW THEREIN

"PEGGY! Peggy!" Who was calling Peggy? But the question seemed rather to be who was *not* calling her. From the corner by the low window came the grandmother's querulous voice, "Peggy, my dear, come and pick up my stitch! I've dropped a stitch, and my old eyes can't find it," and Peggy turned to her; but before she had straightened the knitting, a little voice rose in a wail from the door-step, where her small brother whittled a boat from a water-worn shingle, "Oh, Peggy, I've cut my finger! Oh, come, Peggy, bring a rag and do it up!" and mother by the cradle said, "Peggy, do take the baby a minute while I finish mixing the brown-bread." Even outside the cottage door father was saying, "Peggy, dear, bring me a drink of water," as he tinkered his dory close by. She took the baby from her mother's arms and went to the woeful brother. "Don't cry, Willy, dear, run to mother for a rag; wait a minute, please, father,"—and Willie having brought a little strip of cotton, she sat down on the doorstep and proceeded to bind the wounded finger while the

boy lay cooing on her knees. "Now run, and take some water to father; there's a good boy," she said, and she wiped the tears away from two cheeks like apples, round and rosy. And Willy scampered for the dipper, and carried it dripping to his father, and then returned to nestle close to his sister's side. The baby fretted a little, and Peggy gathered it up and laid its pretty head tenderly against her shoulder and cooed to it soft and low:—

"There was a ship a-sailing, a-sailing on the sea.
And oh! it was all laden with pretty things for thee!"

Then it opened its large wise eyes and gazed out at the glitter and sparkle of the bright day, and tried to find its mouth with its thumb in an aimless but contented fashion.

"Sing the rest of it, sister," begged Willy. There was a world of love in the little fellow's gesture as he slipped both hands around Peggy's arm and hugged it tight while she went on:—

There were comfits in the cabin and apples in the hold,
The sails were made of silk and the masts were made of gold:
The four-and-twenty sailors that walked about the decks
Were four-and-twenty white mice with chains about their necks;
The captain was a duck with a compass on his back,
And when the ship began to sail, the captain cried, 'quack,
quack!'" .

"Now sing it all over again!" cried Willy, laying his cheek against the arm he was hugging; "do please sing it all over again!" And laughing, patient Peggy began it again.

There was a porch outside the door, and the shadow of its square roof fell on the wooden step where the children sat. There were vines of flowering-bean and morning-glory trained up at the sides, all blossoming in scarlet clusters and deep blue bells.

It was a hot, bright July day. Before the cottage stretched the level beach of purplish-gray shimmering sand; and beyond it the summer sea, light turquoise blue and calm, lay smiling, streaked with lines of lazy foam from long-spent breakers far away. On a promontory reaching to the east, the large mass of the buildings of a great hotel basked in the heat, its warmly tinted walls and red roofs dimly beautiful in the soft haze of the distance. The pine woods were thick behind the cottage and stretched away to the south; near it a patch of earth was devoted to "garden-stuff," — potatoes, beans, and the like, and beyond this was a flower-garden, so luxuriant and splendid in color that one wondered at seeing it in so poor a place.

Peggy's childish voice was very pleasant to hear as she sang to the children.

Her father and mother had given her the sweet and stately name of Margaret, but her grandmother had adopted its old-fashioned abbreviation of Peggy, and it had grown dear in all ears where she was known. She was a girl of about thirteen, not tall for her age, but slender, with rich, red-gold hair, which was a great cross and affliction to her; for every one who

poke of it did so in a half-pitying way, as if it were to be deprecated at least, if not a thing of which to be thoroughly ashamed. Such vigorous, rebellious hair, too, thronging back from her honest forehead in richly waved, thick locks, which no combing would make straight and smooth. How she envied the sleek, satin sheen of the heads of the few girls she knew! Her eyes were clear and gray, her mouth large, with fine and noble curves and even, white teeth, and her fresh cheek was touched by many salutations of the sun. No one would ever have called her pretty, — the word could not apply to her, — but there was an indescribable air of modesty and sweet intelligence about her which at once attracted and charmed.

The sunshine flickered through the leaves and touched her bright head as she sat with the little ones in the porch. Inside, the mother's swift step went to and fro, about her work; by the open window, the grandmother's knitting-needles clicked softly. Outside, there were the sounds of bees and early crickets, a bird's note now and then, the call of a sandpiper, the song of a sparrow, or a cry far aloft in the blue from a wandering gull afloat on white wings, ever the low, far murmuring of the sea, and again and again the dull strokes of the hammer with which the father was mending his boat. As he moved about, it was evident he was lame; a long sickness in the winter had left him "crippled," as his neighbors said, with

rheumatism. He had a fine, intelligent face, and had not always lived the life which poverty now forced upon him. His eyes were sad and anxious, he looked weather-beaten and worn, and his expression enlisted one's sympathies at once. He was fighting a hard fight to keep the wolf from his door; for his lameness made it extremely difficult to go fishing, like the rest of the folk living near. And now, since the attack of illness had exhausted every resource, very slender at the best, he was worn with anxiety for the coming winter's necessities. In summer it was well enough; they could make a shift to live from day to day; but when every force of nature should be marshaled against them in the bitter weather to come, how would they be able to endure it, and fight want away till another spring? He hardly dared to think of it.

Peggy adored her father. She was his chief and best joy in the world. When she saw him so full of care, and heard him with the good and patient mother discussing ways and means of getting bread, when they dreamed not she was listening, she would have given worlds to help them. Her whole mind was full of the problem. What could *she* do? Leave them and go away and try to earn something to help? But they would not listen to it; they could not live without her. She was their courage, their stay, their joy, and cheer, embodied. One winter's day, when her father was at his worst, and she felt as though despair

were settling down upon them, she remembered the groups of idle pleasure-seekers she had seen wandering across the sands in summer days, from the great hotel on the Point. "How wonderful must be their lives, with no anxieties like ours!" she thought. As the picture of these loiterers lingered in her imagination, she remembered the flowers they wore, the buttonhole bouquets of the men, and the nosegays of the maidens, and like a flash it came to Peggy what she might do. She might have a garden of her own, and sell flowers to these people at the hotel, — why not? She would try, at least. She told her mother and father of her thought; but they did not give it much weight at first. Still she was not daunted. With a resolute energy she bent all powers to compass it. First, she chose a piece of ground wherein some former occupant of the place had raised vegetables; it was partly surrounded by a ruinous wall to keep out stray cattle, and was close under the southern windows of their rickety little cottage. There was not much snow upon the ground, and every day she went to the beach and brought basket after basket of kelp, which she spread upon the ground, till by patience and perseverance she had covered it all over. It was not an easy task, and she had driftwood to bring daily from the beach, beside. But she knew how much more hope of success she would have if only she could spread the seaweed and leave it to impart its nourishment to the

sandy soil; and when it was done, she rejoiced in every rain that helped it to decay. The next thing was to get seeds for her garden. And when her father was better, so that she could be spared, she took long walks inland among their widely scattered neighbors to beg of each a few; for every house had its little flower-plot in summer; and the folk were kind and gave her all they could spare,—marigolds, larkspur, sweet peas and mignonette, sunflowers, nasturtiums, pansies, and coreopsis,—hardy, humble flowers, friendly and swift to grow.

"I'm sure you're welcome to 'em, child," Aunt Sally, the blacksmith's wife, had said, as she put the packet into Peggy's hand; "and I hope ye'll do all you're thinkin' to with 'em; but I calc'late ye have no idea what a job 't is to take care on 'em,"—a fact which Peggy did indeed discover in good time. "If ye'll come up in the spring, I'll give ye a root o' lad's love and lemon-balm; they smell very sweet an' pure, but they don't have any seeds to speak on," the old lady added.

With what anxious joy Peggy watched for the first signs of spring! As soon as the snow was melted, she began to work about her garden-plot, every day a little, as long as she could be spared. With her strong young arms she brought stone by stone to the broken wall till she had made it whole again; but it was a work of days and weeks. Then little by little

raked away the kelp. But the most difficult part the work was to come, to dig up the earth thoroughly, — "could she do it?" she wondered. Here came an unexpected help. One day a neighbor with his sail spread to the breeze, flying past at high tide, so near that he made out what Peggy was trying to do in her walled inclosure.

"Wal, if that don't beat all!" he said to himself; "there is n't Maxwell's red-haired gal tryin' to dig a garden! Her father's laid up, — blest if she has n't sunk!" That night, after supper, he walked down from "his place" and presented himself with a broad axe in his hand. "Why could n't ye have asked me on us to help ye?" he cried, with rough kindness; and straightway set himself to work with such will that before dark it was all done, nor would he listen to her thanks as he went off. "I wish ye good luck with your garden!" he said, and so departed, followed by Peggy's gratitude.

There was yet much work to be done, but she could do it all, she knew, and she toiled away with a light heart, till she had raked out every stone and laid the beds all straight and even, and planted every seed; and then she paused to rest. By this time her father was able to creep about a little, for the days were growing long, and he looked at Peggy's handiwork with tears in his eyes. He was too helpless to do much to the little patch where every year he tried to

raise a few vegetables, so Peggy put her young shoulder to that wheel also, and planted the beans and potatoes, and gave them all the care she could. Meantime she rejoiced in the fresh showers which fell to moisten the hidden flower-seeds, and the warm sun which would coax the green leaves from the dark earth. Every turn of weather had a new interest for her, every hour was bright with hope. "I declare," said the grandmother, "it does me good just to see the child; she's brighter than a summer mornin'!"

Indeed she was, so full of cheer, so modest, dutiful and patient, the kindest little heart that ever beat in human breast, always ready to help and comfort whenever comfort was needed! Happy girl! Her gentle nature was a key that—all unconsciously to herself—opened for her rich treasures of love that should not fail.

One morning in the last week in May, small Will came running in, quite breathless. "Peggy, come out and look! The seeds have comed up all in a row, like little green so'diers!" And Peggy, with the baby on her arm, followed the delighted little fellow to the garden. It was true, at last; there were rows of corn flowers and marigolds piercing the soil, the first and strongest of them all. And after them, day after day came the rest in a swift procession, till it seemed as if a soft green veil were laid over the earth. The real work began indeed, for with the flowers had sprung

en thousand weeds more vigorous than they. But here is no saying truer than that "where there's a will there's a way," and Peggy, not being able to get away from household cares during the day, would steal the hours from sleep to accomplish her object. It was light enough to see between three and four o'clock in the morning, and many and many a pink dawn found her kneeling on the dewy ground (whereon she had spread a bit of carpet, for she had been taught never to trifle with her health), weeding industriously, till there was not a green thing except the flowers to be seen in the whole place. No sooner were the weeds conquered, however, than they rose again, a second colony, — clover, quitch-grass, purslane, chickweed, pigweed, ragweed, and the rest, and when these had been exterminated, then came transplanting, separating the crowded plants, putting sticks and strings along the wall for the vines to climb, and a tiresome, daily system of watering to be carried on, without which the whole attempt would have been a failure. Fortunately there was a fine well near the house, and even little Willie could help, and father could stand and pump for them, and sometimes bring water, too; and so at last the reward of so much toil and care was before them. The garden was truly a beautiful sight. Over the wall the nasturtiums ran like flame, and the sweet peas climbed, just breaking into white and pink and purple and wonderful scarlet, and the flowering-

bean clusters were almost as red as pomegranate blossoms. There were ranks of corn-flowers in lovely, delicate rose and azure; there were marigolds and venidiums, whole solar systems of suns and stars; there were golden summer chrysanthemums and *Coreopsis coronata* superb to see, and phloxes that were like masses of rich velvet-scarlet, maroon and pink and crimson. There were others to come, asters and zinnias and sunflowers later; but the mignonette had begun, and spikes of larkspur — burning, brilliant blue — set off the yellow and fire colors, and the California poppies — cups of flaming gold — and the pied pansies, and crimson flax, and pink mallows! Well might the whole family wonder and rejoice over Peggy's garden, and all the neighbors make pilgrimages to see it!

And now at last it was time for the great attempt, and she was trying to summon all her courage to take on the morrow her first flowers to the hotel, for sale. A kind of stage fright came over the poor child at this eleventh hour. After all her brave toil, it would seem a simple thing to take her blossoms and pace quietly the long piazzas where wealth and beauty and idleness would give her the daily bread for herself and her dear ones in exchange. But the shy girl felt as if it were an absolute impossibility. Suddenly all her courage ebbed and left her in deep despondency. She sat by the little window in the grandmother's old

air; the wind that wandered through the beautiful summer twilight brought her the delicate sweet odors from her garden ; their sweetness made her heart sink. She turned from the open casement. In the corner, by a dim little lamp, her mother was mending the worn sleeves of her father's coat. Peggy looked at her. How pale and patient she was ! The cradle stood near, and her foot sought the rocker and stirred gently each time the baby nestled uneasily ; in the chair near, her father had fallen asleep, his fine athletic face faintly touched by the feeble light. His thin hand lay on the arm of the chair. How thin it was, how sad his sleeping face ! Not one of them had quite all they needed to eat on that day ; and what for to-morrow ? Then a feeling of shame at her own cowardice came to Peggy's rescue. What were ten thousand indifferent eyes, what if everybody should laugh at her red hair and mean apparel ; if they only would buy her flowers, she would not care, — no, she could *not* ! She would be deaf, dumb, and blind to everything except her purpose. She left the window and came and stood beside her mother's chair. "Mother, dear, let me finish it for you," she said, trying to take the work out of her hands. But her mother said, "No, Peggy, darling, don't mind, I've nearly finished. You'd better go to bed soon, for you'll have to be up very early, you know ;" and she put her arm around her girl's slender figure and drew her close,

and laid her tired head against the brave little heart that was beating fast with its struggles and hopes and fears. Her father opened his eyes upon the two,—all unconscious of his gaze. No one knew better than he what was passing in his daughter's mind. But he had no word with which to comfort her; he could only cling to her as her mother was doing, and bless her with all his soul, as she came to give him a good-night kiss.

She climbed to her little nest under the eaves and leaned out to look once more at the summer night. The calm sea mirrored every twinkling star. Here and there a light gleamed from some fishing-schooner anchored and rocking almost imperceptibly on the softly heaving tide. Afar on its lonely promontory stood the dark mass of the great hotel, ablaze and quivering with electric lights, like a living jewel of many facets. So great a hope, so great a fear for her trembled in its glitter and gleam. She was glad she could not hear the band that she knew must be playing for the gay, whirling dancers in the great hall. "I wonder if they all are wearing flowers from the city," she thought, "roses and delicate things so different from mine. I wonder if they will want mine when they see them! Perhaps, perhaps!" she sighed.

Little Willy was asleep in the low cot; he half-woke as she laid her head on the pillow, and possessed himself of her arm, hugging it again with both his

Dear Peggy," he said, half asleep, "dear, dear, dear!"

The morning broke calm and clear. It was not far o'clock when she was stealing out in the freshening dawn to her garden-plot. The sky was one great wash of pink, and at the horizon crimson and gold where the sun approached from the other side, and all the sea reflected the sky.

"Oh!" thought she, "the whole world looks like a rose!" as she pushed the gate and entered the path. How the birds were singing! "Oh, song sparrow," she cried to the little brown creature that sat on the wall and poured forth such a strain of joy that it seemed to fill the air with cheer, "are you really so sad as that? I'd like to change places with you!"

She cut the flowers with swift and dexterous hands, and filled her basket heaping full. And now the sun had risen in still magnificence, and touched with golden finger the sails of small fishing-craft, creeping out to the day's work, and the snowy wings of lazy gulls afloat overhead in the perfect blue, and made the bright hair of our Peggy as glorious as the marigolds she was tying into bunches as she sat on the little step with her basket and a spool of thread. Some dim artistic sense led her to mass each color separately. All the scarlet sweet peas she put together. So with the pink and the purple and the white; so with the red poppies, to which she added a few delicate grasses,

and with the mignonette; but with the pale-yellow summer chrysanthemums she put a few orange marigolds, and made of their radiant disks a splendid conflagration of color. There were small and large bunches to be tied, and buttonhole bouquets; and when all were done, she put them into a wooden tulip with a few inches of water, and left it in the cool dark of the cellar till she should be ready to take them away. But the slender breakfast was to be helped over, and the family started for the day, before she could leave them. The baby, usually so good and quiet, *would* fret; it seemed to be out of sorts.

"Poor little girl," Peggy said to herself, "you are hungry; that is the trouble, I know, for you are the best little sister in the world."

The grandmother was full of aches and pains this morning, but she said, "I'll keep the baby, Peggy, dear; you go and get ready before the sun grows so hot that you'll suffer going across the sands. Here's something to wear on your head, child," and she drew out of her pocket a nicely folded blue handkerchief; "it's better than nothing," she said, "though it's faded and old enough." Poor Peggy! She had no hat at all; the handkerchief was, as grandmother said, better than nothing, — that was all.

"Go, now, and walk very slowly, dear," her mother said. She brought a long and broad shallow basket, into which they put the flowers, and over all laid

ightly some newspapers, which were tucked carefully in around the edges, to save her treasures from wind and sun. She had but her one gown to wear, a dull, dark-blue cotton print, made in the simplest fashion, with neither frill nor furbelow. She had no time for such, nor means if she had had time. Her thick, bright locks were plaited into one long, rich braid with the ends left loose, for she had not even a bit of ribbon wherewith to tie it. She knotted the blue kerchief under her chin, kissed them all as if she were bidding the family farewell for a month, and set off with her basket on her arm. Willy cried to go too, but it was too far for his little feet to trudge, or she would gladly have taken him. They watched her from the door till her figure lessened to a mere speck on the sand. How would she return to them, — with failure or success? They hardly dared to think!

Meantime, the little maid kept courageously on her way. The sun was high and hot, but a breath of coolness came from the waves which spilled themselves in long breakers of lazy brine along the edge of the sand. But she hardly noticed the heat, or the cool, whispering water; her eyes were fixed on the great building before her, which began to grow more distinct every moment. Windows, doors, chimneys, roofs, gables, columns, gradually disentangled themselves; and she saw knots of people here and there, and a crowd scattered on the long piazza; and before the

house on the level green, youths and maidens, gayly clad, were playing tennis, careless of the sun. Like a soldier marching to battle, Peggy walked past these, straight up to one of the three broad flights of steps,—the one at the left-hand entrance. She dared not look about her, for she felt many eyes upon her as she set her basket down on the lower step and took off the protecting newspapers, folding them for future use. She slipped the grandmother's old kerchief off her head, she was so warm, and began to climb the stairs slowly and with sinking heart. She stood still at last, with down-dropped eyes and blushing cheeks, feeling all the dreaded eyes upon her, and wishing she were a plover, to fly home by the breakers' edge. Suddenly a child's voice at her side said, "Oh, look at the pretty flowers, mamma! I want some; please buy some for me!" and a lovely lady in black spoke to her gently. Peggy started like a frightened sand-piper, though the lady only said, "How lovely your flowers are, my dear! May I have some? What is the price of this bunch of sweet peas?" and she drew a mass of fragrant scarlet flowers out of the basket, while the little girl who had begged stretched out both hands for them.

"Wait a minute, Minnie. How much are they?" she asked of Peggy.

"Twenty-five cents," Peggy ventured in answer; and the lady drew the coin from her purse and laid it

Peggy's happy palm. The contact seemed to give her new life, and her eyes grew moist with joy. She sent a swift glance out over the hot coast-line to where she knew her poor little home lay, a mere speck in the scorching distance, but oh, how dear it seemed! And her hope grew strong and her fears less, and she held the precious piece of silver tight, lest it should take wings and fly away from her.

But now the contents of Peggy's basket began to disappear with surprising rapidity, faster and faster, till more than half her nosegays were sold, and she was quite breathless with joy. Nothing had ever looked so beautiful to her as the coins of silver she held in her hand, which soon grew too small to hold them all! They meant bread for her hungry dear ones; they meant joy for that little home saddened by poverty. She cared no more what people said, what they thought; she was sure of success for to-day; she held already help for to-morrow in her delighted hands.

"May I have this pansy for my buttonhole?" said a fine deep voice at her ear. She started, and turned and gave the speaker the last little bunch she had left. He put the flowers in their place, and took from the basket two bunches of white sweet peas and slipped the money into her hand.

"Tell me," he said very gently, "who taught you to put the colors in masses like these? Why do you do it?"

"I don't know," she answered; "they are pretty so," and she shyly proceeded to rearrange the nosegays she had left.

"Why do you put grass with the poppies?" I asked. "Did any one tell you to do it?"

"No," she said; "but I always think they belong together."

"Yes, they do," he said; "but who told you so?"

"No one; they told me, themselves," she answered, smiling a little.

"Fortunate child!" he said; "they don't tell everyone, though it's an open secret."

He was moving away, with his hands full of sweet peas, when he seemed to remember something, and came back.

"Will you come with me," he said, "and bring your basket to a lady who is not strong enough to come so far down the piazza?"

Peggy followed silently, and in a sheltered corner, shaded carefully from the sun, she found one of the loveliest sights she had ever seen. A lady, sixty years old, perhaps, was lying back in a reclining chair, and about her several people sat quietly chatting. The lady's face was as fair as lilies, with eyes clear and undimmed by her sixty years. Her smile was sweeter than any smile Peggy had ever seen. Her hair was like silvered snow over her calm forehead, and she wore above this shining hair a little cap of

lace as delicate as if woven of cobwebs and hoar-frost, with a bit of white satin ribbon like a moonbeam folded on the top.

"She is beautiful as my sweet peas," thought Peggy, as Mr. Willard put the flowers into her lovely hands; "they just suit her."

"I've brought you some posies, Mrs. Burton, as you see," said her friend; "and here is the little girl who knows all about them."

"Oh, how beautiful!" cried Mrs. Burton, in a delightful, sympathetic voice; "a thousand thanks! And," turning to Peggy, "you brought them, my dear? Come nearer and let me see what else you have. Why, these are wonderful! Look at them, my daughter," she said to a sweet young girl who sat close beside her. "Why, Nelly, did you ever see anything like them? What color, what Oriental splendor! Where did you get them? tell me, my child! I must have them all, every one; let me see, here are eight bouquets, five large and three smaller; twenty-five cents, did you say? Here it is; just two dollars. What is it, — these small bunches only ten? Oh, never mind, I'm sure they're worth quite as much as the large ones. There, Nelly dear, that's for you, and this for you, and you, and you," she said, laughing delightfully, as she gave one to each person about her. "There, now, we all are happy, aren't we? And next, I wish to know all about these

extraordinary flowers; sit down here, my dear, and tell me."

Peggy did as she was bid, though she longed to fly home, since her task was done for that day, but the lady had been so kind she could not refuse; indeed, no one could ever refuse *that* lady anything! When, by gentle questioning, she had won from Peggy all her story, she laid her hand on the little girl's bright hair with a beautiful gesture of affectionate protection; but she made no comment, she asked only, "Are you coming to-morrow, my dear, to bring some more flowers? Don't fail, for we all want them."

With joy Peggy answered, "Yes, indeed, I will come!"

"Remember, I wish a fresh bouquet every morning, and one for Nelly, too. Now, I know you're longing to get back; you shall go;" and Peggy took up her empty basket, her eyes bright with tears of delight.

"You dear child," said the sweet young lady whom her mother called Nelly, "did you wear no hat all that long way across the hot sand?"

"No," answered Peggy; "I did n't mind, I had my grandmother's handkerchief; it did very well," and she took it out of her pocket to tie again over her bright hair.

The younger lady reached behind her mother's chair and took a straw hat from where it hung by its strings, and quietly placed it on Peggy's head. It was a

road-brimmed hat of beautiful braided white straw; simply trimmed with some soft, white mull, light as the foam of the sea. The child could scarcely believe her ears when the lady said, "There, dear, it's for you. Don't come out in the sun without it again!" and kissed her cheek. "Now, good-by. Don't say a word. Run home."

"Thank you, oh, thank you!" cried Peggy.

Run home? She did not run, she flew! She did not look behind her, she thought of nothing but the joy she was taking to those anxious hearts who were expecting her. As her swift steps covered the distance between her and that cottage of her love, she seemed to tread on air; she forgot she was hungry and hot and tired; she could not stop a moment to rest; while under the shade of the pretty hat her cheeks burned and eyes glistened with a joy too great to be told.

Meantime, the watchers in the cottage counted the moments of her absence; and when at last her slight figure became visible, yet a long, long way off, little Willy rushed forth to meet her.

"Stop, Willy, wait for me," his father cried, moving slowly down the steps. "Take hold of my hand, Willy; we'll go together." But she came so fast that the two slow walkers had gone only a short way before she caught up to them, quite breathless, and flung her arms round her father's neck, and cried, "Oh, father, I sold them all!" throwing her empty

basket as far as she could, till it rolled over and over on the sand, while she hugged him and kissed him again and again. And what a story she had to tell when in a few minutes they were all together again in the humble little room, and she spread out all her precious earnings on the table before them. There were eight dollars in silver pieces, — it was incredible! What rejoicing, what happiness!

"Oh, mother!" cried Peggy, suddenly growing quite white, "I'm so hungry! Is there anything to eat?"

"My dear, my dear! Here is your bowl of porridge, the last oatmeal we have in the house. I saved it for you;" and she set it before the tired girl; for it was quite the middle of the afternoon, many hours since the scant breakfast. Well might she be hungry with all she had gone through!

"But, mother dear, as soon as I rest a little, I'll go up to the village for what we need."

"No, indeed, my darling, I will go; you mind the baby and rest all you can. But where did you get the beautiful hat?" And Peggy told, and there were smiles and tears, and kisses and congratulations afresh.

"Here's your kerchief all safe, grandmother dear," she said, taking it carefully out of her pocket.

"Oh, Peggy, you're a blessing to us!" the old woman sighed; "I always said you were not born on Sunday for nothing. And you are going with your flowers again to the hotel, to-morrow?"

"Yes, going again to-morrow," Peggy cried, all her errors blown to the winds.

"My Margaret, my little Peggy, my brave girl!" father said, with tender pride.

The group she had left at the hotel had watched her depart with no common interest.

"What a really beautiful creature!" Mr. Willard said when she was out of hearing.

"Yes, and what a beautiful soul!" cried the enthusiastic old lady. "Now, I am going to be that child's dry godmother. That is settled! You shall see! She shall have everything she needs. She shall have all her people taken care of and put in the way of helping themselves, and she shall not be separated from them, for that would break her heart; but she shall have an education, and all her gifts and graces shall be cultivated for her own joy and the joy of all who come in contact with her!"

"I told her she was a fortunate child," said Mr. Willard, smiling, "but I hardly knew how fortunate; yet I think you are more fortunate in having the power to do these beautiful things."

"Why, what is the use of money but for such things?" she answered. "Of what good is my money to me if I cannot use it to make people better and happier?"

And so she did all that she promised herself she would do for Peggy and Peggy's family. She allowed

her to go on selling the flowers while they lasted, watching her daily, growing to love her more and more, and to admire and respect her, as did all who came near her. Before the garden was exhausted, Peggy had made three hundred dollars for her father,—a fortune it seemed to them all! No more fears for the winter now! At home they fairly worshiped her, and she was so happy that she no longer envied the song-sparrow as it sang on the garden wall, the only bird that stays to sing the summer through. “I’m just as glad as you are,” she said, as she watched it and listened to its sweet warble; and it turned its pretty head and looked at her with bright black eyes, as much as to say, “I know it, merry comrade, and you deserve it, too!”

And this is what grew in Peggy’s garden. She planted more than the flowers. She sowed seeds of patience and meekness and faithfulness, courage and hope and love,—and glorious was the blossoming thereof.

ALMOST A TRAGEDY

"CHRISTINE! May we come in and see you to-night, Christine?" The children, peeping in at the kitchen door, pushed it wide and danced over the threshold, delighted at the smile which greeted them.

There were three of them, Sylvia Hastings and her little brother Charlie, and Archie, a boy of fourteen, home for the winter holidays. Dearly they loved to visit Christine in her bright kitchen, and no wonder, for both the place and its occupant were most cheerful, to say nothing of the charms of Minzie, the leek Maltese cat that lay basking on the mat in the red glow of the fire, and the absurd old gray parrot that sat muffled up in his feathers on a perch in the corner of the room. It was early dusk of the winter day, sharp and cold; a thin, crisp layer of snow covered the ground without, and made the warmth and brightness within more delightful. And as for Christine, the Norwegian maid who kept the house, she was as refreshing as morning sunshine, with her rosy cheeks and milk-white skin, and rich hair piled in a beautiful red-gold heap at the top of her head. The children adored her, and her employers blessed the land

of Norway for having produced anything so charming and so satisfactory.

"Now, what are you doing, Christine?" asked Sylvia, as they stood by the table and peered into dull, red earthen dish filled with water, in which 1 potatoes peeled as smooth as ivory. "What are the things? Potatoes? Are n't they pretty, Archie? They look just like ivory!"

"Take me up and show me!" cried little Charlie and Archie lifted him so that he could peep, to Christine laid a clean towel on the table, spread the potatoes on it, rolled them about in it till they were quite dry, then put them into a shallow tin pan which she had buttered, and shook them till they all shone with a thin coat of butter.

"What are they for?" asked Sylvia.

"To bake for your supper, Miss Sylvia," answered Christine.

"But why do you butter them?"

"Oh, so they may bake a lovely light brown, and the skin you will not have to take off at all!" answered she.

"Oh, yes, I know," said Sylvia, "they are so good!" and while Christie went on with her preparations for supper, all three sat themselves down on the neat braided mat beside Minzie, the sleepy, comfortable cat. She stretched her long length out slowly, and really seemed to smile at the children, as she lay in

the ruddy firelight with her eyes half shut, lazily responding to their caresses. She put out her paw, its sharp claws softly sheathed, and with a deprecating gesture gently patted their hands, as if she were boxing her pet kitten's ears.

"Pretty Minzie!" Archie said; "you are so good-tempered, and you know so much!"

"Good-evening, good-evening! Won't you take a walk?" cried a harsh voice from the corner.

"It's Polly!" cried Sylvia. "Oh, you ridiculous old bird! How you startled me!"

"What have you got in your pocket?" Polly continued, turning her head this way and that, and eying the children askance.

"Poor Polly! Not a thing!" said Sylvia. "I wish I had thought to save some nuts for you."

"What does Polly want? What does Polly want?" cried the bird, and then began to utter sounds no language can describe; sounds which more nearly resembled the racket of a watchman's rattle gone distracted than anything else I can think of.

Minzie raised her head and looked toward the corner where Polly was perched, and then settled comfortably back again, blinking her green eyes.

"Wise kitty!" said Archie.

"Indeed she is wise," said Sylvia. "What do you think she did, Archie? When we fed the birds under the dining-room window, she hid in the hedge and

pounced on a bird every day, till mamma at last gave up feeding them at all, for it seemed cruel to lead them into a trap like that. Well, what does Minzie do then but steal a piece of bread from the kitchen and carry it out on the snow, and there bite it and crumble it herself, and scratch and scatter the crumbs all about. Then she hid in the hedge, the sly thing, and watched. Down came the birds,—poor little hungry dears, and Minzie sprang and caught one, and off she went with him to eat him up behind a bush. “Oh, you naughty, naughty eat!” continued Sylvia, lifting her finger and shaking her head at the comfortable creature, who only blinked in supreme indifference and content. “I wonder at you! How can you be so cruel?”

“But she is n’t naughty, Syl,” said Archie. “Cats were made to catch birds, don’t you know it?”

“Well, *I* would n’t pounce on poor little birds and eat them, if I were a cat,” cried Sylvia.

“And I would n’t eat ‘ittle birds,” said Charlie, making up a virtuous, wee mouth, which Sylvia stooped to kiss at once, it was so irresistible.

“But you *do* eat them, Syl,” Archie said. “You are just as bad as Minzie.” Sylvia turned to him a shocked little face. “What do you mean, Archie?” she said.

“Why, Syl dear, did n’t I see twelve small birds served up on a dish yesterday at dinner, and did n’t

pu eat one, all but his bones? And all their claws
ere curled up so pitifully above them, too!"

"Oh, but, Archie, that's something quite different!
hose birds were bought at the butcher's, you know."

"Never mind," interrupted Archie; "it is very
early the same thing. You were made to eat some
inds of birds as well as kitty, so don't you blame her
or doing what you do yourself. Don't you remember
hen papa was reading to mamma last night in a book
alled 'Emerson's Essays,' how astonished mamma
as when he read this, 'Only the butcher stands be-
ween us and the tiger,' or something like that, and
ow they talked about it afterward? The cat is a
ittle tiger, — she belongs to the same family."

"Yes, I heard them talking," said Sylvia, "but I
did n't understand."

"Well, never mind, dear," her brother answered;
"I don't think it is very easy to understand. We
need n't trouble ourselves about it. Only, don't you
blame poor Minzie for doing what she was made to
do." Sylvia shook her head thoughtfully; she found
it a very hard riddle to read. Most of us do.

"Ship ahoy!" cried a harsh voice from the corner.
"Good-morning, dear! How do you do? What have
you got in your pocket? Polly wants a cracker! Good
gracious! Wish you happy New Year!"

They all broke into laughter, Christine's merry
voice mingling in the chorus. Minzie rose from the

mat, stretched herself, slowly crossed the room to where Polly sat chattering on her perch, and began to play with the chain by which the bird was fastened, giving the loop a push with her paw where it hung down, striking it every time it swung within reach. The parrot watched her meanwhile with the greatest interest. "Miaw!" cried Polly suddenly. Minzie stopped and looked up. "Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the bird, as much as to say, "Did you think it was another cat?" and forthwith began to scream afresh, crowing like a cock, barking like a dog, imitating the creaking of a door, and then suddenly going into a frenzy of sneezing and coughing and snuffling like a person in the most desperate stages of influenza.

Minzie sat still, looking up at the bird, as if she enjoyed the performance; and as for the children, they laughed till they were tired.

"Truly, they are the best of friends, the two," said Christie. "I don't know what one would do without the other; they play with each other by the hour together."

"Come, Sylvia, bring Charlie upstairs; it is time," called mamma's voice; and away the children skipped.

Christie went to and fro about her work, — the pleasantest picture imaginable. "I think I'll set my bread to rising before supper," she said to herself; "then I shall have more time to write my letter home this evening." So she worked fast and busily, and

When the bread was made, she put it in a large wooden bowl and covered it up with a nice white towel, and left it to rise on the dresser. The cat and the parrot watched all these operations with an interest that amused her, — it was so human.

After supper, when she had done all her work and everything was in order for the night, she bade good-bye to Minzie and Polly, and went upstairs to write her weekly letter to her dear, far-off Norway. Her room was very warm and comfortable, and as fresh and tidy as herself. She set her lamp down on the table, took out her little portfolio from the drawer, and began to write. She wrote slowly, and had been busy about an hour when she heard a loud, distressed "Miaw!" outside her door. She looked up. "Miaw! Miaw! Miaw!" sounded quickly and anxiously from Minzie. Evidently something unusual was the matter. She had never heard so anxious a cry from that comfortable cat before.

"Why, what is it?" she cried, as she rose and opened the door. Minzie sprang in, apparently greatly excited, with her tail upright and curling at the top. She ran round and round Christie, rubbing herself against the girl's ankles, and looking up into her face with a most curious expression of solicitude and agitation. "What is the matter? What is the trouble, Minzie?" Christie kept asking, as if the poor dumb creature could explain her distress in words. But

Minzie only "miawed" more distractedly than before she went toward the door, looking back at Christie then ran to her again, took hold of her apron with her teeth, and tried to drag her toward the door "You want me to go downstairs?"

The cat frisked before her, turning to see if she were following; then, as if satisfied, she fled lightly and swiftly down the stair and into the kitchen, Christie coming after, bearing the lamp in her hand. When she reached the kitchen door she heard a cry from the parrot.

"Come, come, come!" cried Polly. "Good gracious! Won't you take a walk?"

The voice did not proceed from the bird's accustomed corner, and looking about, the first thing Christie saw was the linen towel she had spread over the bread, on the floor, and Minzie standing up on her hind paws with her two white-mittenred fore-feet at the edge of the table, craning her head forward and crying piteously. There, in the middle of the large pan of soft dough, sat Polly, sunk to her shoulders in the sticky mass, only her neck and head with its huge black beak and glassy yellow eyes, to be seen. She had pulled the towel off the bread, and, in process of investigating it, had become fastened in the thick paste, sinking deeper and deeper till she was in danger of disappearing altogether.

"Ship ahoy!" cried Polly. "Come! Poor Polly! What does Polly want?"

Christine burst into laughter, and, greatly to Minzie's distress, lost time in going to call Sylvia and Archie before rescuing the prisoner from her perilous position.

"Oh dear!" cried Sylvia. "How dreadful! What shall we do, Archie?"

Archie, with shouts of merriment, helped Christie disengage the poor bird, and they set her into a basin of warm water to soak. She was perfectly quiet and let them do as they pleased with her, only ejaculating now and then, "Good gracious! What does Polly want? Oh, my! Won't you take a walk?" with other irrelevant remarks, which sent her deliverers off into fresh peals of laughter.

"It's all very well to laugh," said Christine, "and nobody could help it; but if it had not been for Minzie, poor Polly *would* have been smothered in the dough, and that would have been 'Good gracious!' I think!" Then she told the children how Minzie had called her, and insisted on her coming downstairs. They petted the cat and gave her no end of praise, but "Oh, you naughty bird!" cried Syl to the parrot. "Now you see what it is to meddle with things that don't concern you! Just think of it! All Christie's nice bread must go to feed the chickens, and you came near losing your life! Don't you ever meddle again, Polly; do you hear?"

Polly looked too comical. They had washed her as

well as they could, and tried to dry her, and had set her on her perch as near as they dared to the fire. She was so bedraggled and forlorn, with her wet, ruffled feathers, and her lean, shivering body! Minzie sat and looked up at her with sympathetic eyes.

"Bless my soul! What does Polly want?" chattered the poor bird.

"I should think you wanted to be punished, if you weren't punished enough already," laughed Christie, as she fastened the chain more securely about the parrot's leg.

Then she proceeded to make a fresh bowlful of bread in place of that which had nearly made an end of poor Polly; and presently left the two occupants of the kitchen to take care of each other till morning.

THE SANDPIPER'S NEST

IT was such a pretty nest, and in such a pretty place, that I must tell you about it.

One lovely afternoon in May I had been wandering up and down, through rocky gorges, by little swampy bits of ground, and on the tops of windy headlands, looking for flowers, and had found many: large blue violets, the like of which you never saw; white violets, too, creamy and fragrant; gentle little houstonias; gay and dancing erythroniums; and wind flowers delicately tinted, blue, straw-color, pink, and purple. I never found such in the mainland valleys. The salt air of the sea deepens the colors of all flowers. I stopped by a swamp which the recent rains had filled and turned into a little lake. Light green iris-leaves cut the water like sharp and slender swords, and, in the low sunshine that streamed across, threw long shadows over the shining surface. Some blackbirds were calling sweetly in a clump of bushes, and song sparrows sung as if they had but one hour in which to crowd the whole rapture of the spring. As I pressed through the budding bayberry bushes to reach

some milk-white sprays of shadbush which grew by the water side, I startled three curlews. They flew away, trailing their long legs, and whistling fine and clear. I stood still to watch them out of sight. How full the air was of pleasant sounds! The very waves made a glad noise about the rocks, and the whole sea seemed to roar afar off, as if half asleep and murmuring in a kind of gentle dream. The flock of sheep was scattered here and there, all washed as white as snow by the plenteous rains, and nibbling the new grass eagerly; and from near and far came the tender and plaintive cries of the young lambs.

Going on again, I came to the edge of a little beach, and presently I was startled by a sound of such terror and distress that it went to my heart at once. In a moment a poor little sandpiper emerged from the bushes, dragging itself along in such a way that, had you seen it, you would have believed that every bone in its body had been broken. Such a dilapidated bird! Its wings drooped, and its legs hung as if almost lifeless. It uttered continually a shrill cry of pain, and kept just out of the reach of my hand, fluttering hither and thither as if sore wounded and weary. At first I was amazed, and cried out, "Why, friend and gossip! what *is* the matter?" and then stood watching it in mute dismay. Suddenly it flashed across me that this was only my sandpiper's way of concealing

rom me a nest; and I remembered reading about this little trick of hers in a book of Natural History. The object was to make me follow her by pretending she could not fly, and so lead me away from her treasure. So I stood perfectly still, lest I should tread on the precious habitation, and quietly observed my deceitful little friend. Her apparently desperate and hopeless condition grew so comical when I reflected that it was only affectation, that I could not help laughing loud and long. "Dear gossip," I called to her, "pray don't give yourself so much unnecessary trouble! You might know I wouldn't hurt you or your nest for the world, you most absurd of birds!" As if she understood me, and as if she could not brook being ridiculed, up she rose at once, strong and graceful, and flew off with a full, round, clear note, delicious to hear.

Then I cautiously looked for the nest, and found it quite close to my feet, near the stem of a stunted bayberry bush. Mrs. Sandpiper had only drawn together a few bayberry leaves, brown and glossy, a little pale green lichen, and a twig or two, and that was a pretty enough house for her. Four eggs about as large as robins' were within, all laid evenly with the small ends together, as is the tidy fashion of the Sandpiper family. No wonder I did not see them; for they were pale green like the lichen, with brown spots the

color of the leaves and twigs, and they seemed a part of the ground, with its confusion of soft neutral tints. I could not admire them enough, but, to relieve my little friend's anxiety, I came very soon away, and as I came I marveled much that so very small a head should contain such an amount of cunning.

POEMS FOR CHILDREN

POEMS FOR CHILDREN

THE SANDPIPER

ACROSS the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I;
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,—
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white light-houses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,—
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry;

He starts not at my fitful song,
Or flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
He scans me with a fearless eye.
Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

SPRING

The alder by the river
Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over
And oh, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
That once again 't is spring.

The gay green grass comes creeping
So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
And scarlet columbine,
And in the sunny meadows
The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
There peeps the violet blue;
O happy little children!
God made them all for you.

THE BURGOMASTER GULL

THE old-wives sit on the heaving brine,
White-breasted in the sun,
Preening and smoothing their feathers fine,
And scolding, every one.

The snowy kittiwakes overhead,
With beautiful beaks of gold,
And wings of delicate gray outspread,
Float, listening while they scold.

And a foolish guillemot, swimming by,
Though heavy and clumsy and dull,
Joins in with a will when he hears their cry
'Gainst the Burgomaster Gull.

For every sea-bird, far and near,
With an atom of brains in its skull,
Knows plenty of reasons for hate and fear
Of the Burgomaster Gull.

The black ducks gather, with plumes so rich,
And the coots in twinkling lines;
And the swift and slender water-witch,
Whose neck like silver shines;

Big eider-ducks, with their caps pale green
And their salmon-colored vests;
And gay mergansers sailing between,
With their long and glittering crests.

But the loon aloof on the outer edge
Of the noisy meeting keeps,
And laughs to watch them behind the ledge
Where the lazy breaker sweeps.

They scream and wheel, and dive and fret,
And flutter in the foam;
And fish and mussels blue they get
To feed their young at home:

Till hurrying in, the little auk
Brings tidings that benumbs,
And stops at once their clamorous talk, —
“The Burgomaster comes!”

And up he sails, a splendid sight!
With “wings like banners” wide,
And eager eyes both big and bright,
That peer on every side.

A lovely kittiwake flying past
With a slippery pollock fine, —
Quoth the Burgomaster, “Not so fast,
My beauty! This is mine!”

His strong wing strikes with a dizzying shock;
Poor kittiwake, shrieking, flees;
His booty he takes to the nearest rock,
To eat it at his ease.

The scared birds scatter to left and right,
But the bold buccaneer, in his glee,
Cares little enough for their woe and their fright, —
“’T will be *your* turn next!” cries he.

He sees not, hidden behind the rock,
In the seaweed, a small boat's hull,
Nor dreams he the gunners have spared the flock
For the Burgomaster Gull.

So proudly his dusky wings are spread,
And he launches out on the breeze, —
When lo! what thunder of wrath and dread!
What deadly pangs are these!

The red blood drips and the feathers fly,
Down drop the pinions wide;
The robber-chief, with a bitter cry,
Falls headlong in the tide!

They bear him off with laugh and shout;
The wary birds return, —
From the clove-brown feathers that float about
The glorious news they learn.

Then such a tumult fills the place
As never was sung or said;
And all cry, wild with joy, “The base,
Bad Burgomaster 's dead!”

And the old-wives sit with their caps so white,
And their pretty beaks so red,
And swing on the billows, and scream with delight,
For the Burgomaster 's dead!

LITTLE GUSTAVA

LITTLE Gustava sits in the sun,
Safe in the porch, and the little drops run
From the icicles under the eaves so fast,
For the bright spring sun shines warm at last,
And glad is little Gustava.

She wears a quaint little scarlet cap,
And a little green bowl she holds in her lap,
Filled with bread and milk to the brim,
And a wreath of marigolds round the rim:
“Ha, ha!” laughs little Gustava.

Up comes her little gray, coaxing cat,
With her little pink nose, and she mews, “What’s
that?”
Gustava feeds her, — she begs for more;
And a little brown hen walks in at the door;
“Good-day!” cries little Gustava.

She scatters crumbs for the little brown hen.
There comes a rush and a flutter, and then
Down fly her little white doves so sweet,
With their snowy wings and their crimson feet:
“Welcome!” cries little Gustava.

So dainty and eager they pick up the crumbs;
But who is this through the doorway comes?
Little Scotch terrier, little dog Rags,
Looks in her face, and his funny tail wags:
“Ha, ha!” laughs little Gustava.

“You want some breakfast, too?” and down
She sets her bowl on the brick floor brown;
And little dog Rags drinks up her milk,
While she strokes his shaggy locks, like silk:
“Dear Rags!” says little Gustava.

Waiting without stood sparrow and crow,
Cooling their feet in the melting snow:
“Won’t you come in, good folk?” she cried.
But they were too bashful, and stayed outside,
Though “Pray come in!” cried Gustava.

So the last she threw them, and knelt on the mat
With doves and biddy and dog and cat.
And her mother came to the open house-door:
“Dear little daughter, I bring you some more,
My merry little Gustava!”

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures ’t is joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

CHANTICLEER

I WAKE! I feel the day is near;
I hear the red cock crowing !
He cries " 'T is dawn!" How sweet and clear
His cheerful call comes to my ear,
While light is slowly growing.

The white snow gathers, flake on flake;
I hear the red cock crowing !
Is anybody else awake
To see the winter morning break,
While thick and fast 't is snowing ?

I think the world is all asleep;
I hear the red cock crowing !
Out of the frosty pane I peep;
The drifts are piled so wide and deep,
And wild the wind is blowing !

Nothing I see has shape or form;
I hear the red cock crowing !
But that dear voice comes through the storm
To greet me in my nest so warm,
As if the sky were glowing !

A happy little child, I lie
And hear the red cock crowing.

The day is dark. I wonder why
His voice rings out so brave and high,
With gladness overflowing.

THE WATER-BLOOM

A CHILD looked up in the summer sky
Where a soft, bright shower had just passed by;
Eastward the dusk rain-curtain hung,
And swiftly across it the rainbow sprung.

“Papa! Papa! what is it?” she cried,
As she gazed with her blue eyes opened wide
At the wonderful arch that bridged the heaven,
Vividly glowing with colors seven.

“Why, that is the rainbow, darling child,”
And the father down on his baby smiled.
“What makes it, papa?” “The sun, my dear,
That shines on the water-drops so clear.”

Here was a beautiful mystery!
No more questions to ask had she,
But she thought the garden’s loveliest flowers
Had floated upward and caught in the showers—

Rose, violet, orange marigold—
In a ribbon of light on the clouds unrolled!

Red of poppy, and green leaves too,
Sunflower yellow, and larkspur blue.

A great, wide, wondrous, splendid wreath
It seemed to the little girl beneath;
How did it grow so fast up there,
And suddenly blossom, high in the air?

She could not take her eyes from the sight:
“Oh, look!” she cried in her deep delight,
As she watched the glory spanning the gloom,
“Oh, look at the beautiful water-bloom!”

CROCUS

OH, the dear, delightful sound
Of the drops that to the ground
From the eaves rejoicing run
In the February sun!
Drip, drip, drip, they slide and slip
From the icicles’ bright tip,
Till they melt the sullen snow
On the garden bed below.

“Bless me! what is all this drumming?”
Cries the crocus, “I am coming!
Pray don’t knock so long and loud,
For I’m neither cross nor proud.
But a little sleepy still,

With the winter's lingering chill.
Never mind! 'T is time to wake,
Through the dream at last to break!"
'T is as quickly done as said;
Up she thrusts her golden head,
Looks about with radiant eyes
In a kind of shy surprise,
Tries to say in accents surly,
"Well! you called me very early!"
But she lights with such a smile
All the darksome place the while,
Every heart begins to stir
Joyfully at sight of her;
Every creature grows more gay
Looking in her face to-day.
She is greeted, "Welcome, dear!
Fresh smile of the hopeful year!
First bright print of Spring's light feet,
Golden crocus, welcome, sweet!"
And she whispers, looking up
From her richly glowing cup,
At the sunny eaves so high
Overhead against the sky,
"Now I 've come, O sparkling drops,
All your clattering, pattering stops.
And I 'm very glad I came,
And you 're not the least to blame
That you hammered at the snow

Till you wakened me below
With your one incessant tune.
I'm not here a bit too soon!"

THE CONSTANT DOVE

HE white dove sat on the sunny eaves,
nd "What will you do when the north wind grieves?"
he said to the busy nuthatch small,
apping above in the gable tall.

He probed each crack with his slender beak,
nd much too busy he was to speak.
iders, that thought themselves safe and sound,
nd moths and flies and cocoons he found.

Oh! but the white dove she was fair,
Bright she shone in the autumn air,
Turning her head from the left to the right;
Only to watch her was such delight!

"Coo!" she murmured, "poor little thing,
What will you do when the frosts shall sting?
Spiders and flies will be hidden or dead,
Snow underneath and snow overhead."

Nuthatch paused in his busy care:
"And what will *you* do, O white dove fair?"

“Oh, kind hands feed me with crumbs and grain,
And I wait with patience for spring again.”

He laughed so loud that his laugh I heard.
“How can you be such a stupid bird!
What are your wings for, tell me, pray,
But to bear you from tempests and cold away?

“Merrily off to the south I fly,
In search of the summer, presently,
And warmth and beauty I ’ll find anew.
Why don’t you follow the summer, too?”

But she cooed content on the sunny eaves,
And looked askance at the reddening leaves;
And grateful I whispered: “O white dove true,
I ’ll feed you and love you the winter through.”

THE WANING MOON

THE moon is tired and old;
In the morning darkness cold
She drifts up the paling sky,
With cheek flushed wearily.

A little longer, and lo!
She is lost in the sun’s bright glow;
A thin shell, pearly and pale,
’Mid soft white clouds that sail.

Art faint and sad, dear moon ?
Gladness shall find thee soon !
Sorry art thou to wane ?
Thou shalt be young again !

And beautiful as before
Thou shalt live in the sky once more ;
From the baby crescent small
Thou shalt grow to the golden ball :

And again will the children shout,
“Oh, look at the moon, look out !”
For thou shalt be great and bright
As when God first made night.

THE BIRDS' ORCHESTRA

BOBOLINK shall play the violin,
Great applause to win ;
Lonely, sweet, and sad, the meadow lark
Plays the oboe. Hark !
That inspired bugle with a soul —
'T is the oriole ;
Yellow-bird the clarionet shall play,
Blithe, and clear, and gay.
Purple finch what instrument will suit ?
He can play the flute.
Fire-winged blackbirds sound the merry fife,
Soldiers without strife ;

And the robins wind the mellow horn
Loudly eve and morn.

Who shall clash the cymbals? Jay and crow;
That is all they know.

Hylas twang their harps so weird and high,
Such a tuneful cry!

And to roll the deep, melodious drum,
Lo! the bullfrogs come!

Then the splendid chorus, who shall sing
Of so fine a thing?

Who the names of the performers call
Truly, one and all?

Bluebird, bunting, catbird, chickadee
(Phœbe-bird is he),

Swallow, creeper, crossbill, cuckoo, dove,
Wee wren that I love;

Brisk flycatcher, finches — what a crowd!
Kingbird whistling loud;

Sweet rose-breasted grossbeak, vireo, thrush —
Hear these two, and hush;

Scarlet tanager, song sparrow small
(Dearer he than all;

At the first sound of his friendly voice
Saddest hearts rejoice),

Redpoll, nuthatch, thrasher, plover gray —
Curlew did I say?

What a jangling all the grakles make!
Is it some mistake?

Anvil chorus yellow-hammers strike,
And the wicked shrike
Harshly creaks like some half-open door;
He can do no more.

NIKOLINA

Oh, tell me, little children, have you seen her—
The tiny maid from Norway, Nikolina?
Oh, her eyes are blue as corn flowers 'mid the corn,
And her cheeks are rosy red as skies of morn!

Oh, buy the baby's blossoms if you meet her,
And stay with gentle words and looks to greet her;
She 'll gaze at you and smile and clasp your hand,
But no word of your speech can understand.

Nikolina! Swift she turns if any call her,
As she stands among the poppies hardly taller,
Breaking off their flaming scarlet cups for you,
With spikes of slender larkspur, brightly blue.

In her little garden many a flower is growing—
Red, gold, and purple in the soft wind blowing;
But the child that stands amid the blossoms gay
Is sweeter, quainter, brighter even than they.

Oh, tell me, little children, have you seen her—
This baby girl from Norway, Nikolina?

Slowly she 's learning English words, to try
And thank you if her flowers you come to buy.

MILKING

LITTLE dun cow to the apple-tree tied,
Chewing the cud of reflection,
I that am milking you, sit by your side,
Lost in a sad retrospection.

Far o'er the field the tall daisies blush warm,
For rosy the sunset is dying;
Across the still valley, o'er meadow and farm,
The flush of its beauty is lying.

White foams the milk in the pail at my feet,
Clearly the robins are calling;
Soft blows the evening wind after the heat,
Cool the long shadows are falling.

Little dun cow, 't is so tranquil and sweet!
Are you light-hearted, I wonder?
What do *you* think about, — something to eat?
On clover and grass do you ponder?

I am remembering days that are dead,
And a brown little maid in the gloaming,
Milking her cow, with the west burning red
Over waves that about her were foaming.

Up from the sad east the deep shadows gloomed
Out of the distance and found her;
Lightly she sang while the solemn sea boomed
Like a great organ around her.

Under the light-house no sweet-brier grew,
Dry was the grass, and no daisies
Waved in the wind, and the flowers were few
That lifted their delicate faces.

But oh, she was happy, and careless, and blest,
Full of the song sparrow's spirit;
Grateful for life, for the least and the best
Of the blessings that mortals inherit.

Fairer than gardens of Paradise seemed
The desolate spaces of water;
Nature was hers, — clouds that frowned — stars that
gleamed, —
What beautiful lessons they taught her!

Would I could find you again, little maid,
Striving with utmost endeavor, —
Could find in my breast that light heart, unafraid,
That has vanished for ever and ever!

YELLOW-BIRD

YELLOW-BIRD, where did you learn that song,

Perched on the trellis where grapevines clamber,
In and out fluttering, all day long,

With your golden breast bedropped with amber?

Where do you hide such a store of delight,

O delicate creature, tiny and slender,
Like a mellow morning sunbeam bright
And overflowing with music tender!

You never learned it at all, the song

Springs from your heart in rich completeness,
Beautiful, blissful, clear and strong,
Steeped in the summer's ripest sweetness.

To think we are neighbors of yours! How fine!

Oh, what a pleasure to watch you together,
Bringing your fern-down and floss to reline
The nest worn thin by the winter weather!

Send up your full notes like worshipful prayers;

Yellow-bird, sing while the summer's before you
Little you dream that, in spite of their cares,
Here's a whole family, proud to adore you!

A TRIUMPH

LITTLE Roger up the long slope rushing
Through the rustling corn,
Showers of dewdrops from the broad leaves brushing
In the early morn,

At his sturdy little shoulder bearing,
For a banner gay,
Stem of fir with one long shaving flaring
In the wind away!

Up he goes, the summer sunrise flushing
O'er him in his race,
Sweeter dawn of rosy childhood blushing
On his radiant face;

If he can but set his standard glorious
On the hill-top low,
Ere the sun climbs the clear sky victorious,
All the world aglow!

So he presses on with childish ardor,
Almost at the top!
Hasten, Roger! Does the way grow harder?
Wherfore do you stop?

From below the corn-stalks tall and slender
Comes a plaintive cry;
Turns he for an instant from the splendor
Of the crimson sky,

Wavers, then goes flying toward the hollow,
Calling loud and clear,
“Coming, Jenny! Oh, why did you follow?
Don’t you cry, my dear!”

Small Janet sits weeping ’mid the daisies;
“Little sister sweet,
Must you follow Roger?” Then he raises
Baby on her feet.

Guides her tiny steps with kindness tender,
Cheerfully and gay,
All his courage and his strength would lend her
Up the uneven way,

Till they front the blazing east together;
But the sun has rolled
Up the sky in the still summer weather,
Flooding them with gold.

All forgotten is the boy’s ambition,
Low the standard lies,
Still they stand, and gaze — a sweeter vision
Ne’er met mortal eyes.

That was splendid, Roger, that was glorious,
Thus to help the weak;
Better than to plant your flag victorious
On earth's highest peak!

SLUMBER SONG

THOU little child, with tender, clinging arms,
Drop thy sweet head, my darling, down and rest
Upon my shoulder, rest with all thy charms;
Be soothed and comforted, be loved and blessed.

Against thy silken, honey-colored hair
I lean a loving cheek, a mute caress;
Close, close I gather thee and kiss thy fair
White eyelids, sleep so softly doth oppress.

Dear little face, that lies in calm content
Within the gracious hollow that God made
In every human shoulder, where He meant
Some tired head for comfort should be laid!

Most like a heavy-folded rose thou art,
In summer air reposing, warm and still.
Dream thy sweet dreams upon my quiet heart;
I watch thy slumber; naught shall do thee ill.

WARNING

TAKE heed, O youth, both brave and bright,
Battles there are for you to fight!
Stand up erect and face them all,
Nor turning flee, nor wavering fall.
Of all the world's bewildering gifts,
Take only what the soul uplifts.
Keep firm your hand upon the helm
Lest bitter tempests overwhelm;
And watch lest evil mists should mar
The glory of your morning star,
And robe the glory of the day
You have not reached, in sullen gray.
Choose then, O youth, both bright and brave!
Wilt be a monarch or a slave?
Ah, scorn to take one step below
The paths where truth and honor go!
On manhood's threshold stand, a king,
Demanding all that life can bring
Of lofty thought, of purpose high,
Of beauty and nobility.
Once master of yourself, no fate
Can make your rich world desolate,
And all men shall look up to see
The glory of your victory.

THE BUTCHER-BIRD

I 'LL tell you a story, children,
The saddest you ever heard,
About Rupert, the pet canary,
And a terrible butcher-bird.

There was such a blinding snowstorm
One could not see at all,
And all day long the children
Had watched the white flakes fall;

And when the eldest brothers
Had kissed mamma good-night,
And up the stairs together
Had gone with their bedroom light,

Of a sudden their two fresh voices
Rang out in a quick surprise,
“Mamma! papa! come quickly
And catch him before he flies!”

On a picture-frame perched lightly,
With his head beneath his wing,
They had found a gray bird sitting;
That was a curious thing!

Downstairs to the cosy parlor
They brought him, glad to find
For the storm-tossed wanderer shelter;
Not knowing his cruel mind!

And full of joy were the children
To think he was safe and warm,
And had chosen their house for safety
To hide from the raging storm!

“He shall stay with the pretty Rupert,
And live among mother’s flowers,
And he ’ll sing with our robin and sparrow ; ”
And they talked about it for hours.

Alas, in the early morning
There rose a wail and a cry,
And a fluttering wild in the cages,
And Rupert’s voice rang high.

We rushed to the rescue swiftly ;
Too late ! On the shining cage,
The home of the happy Rupert,
All rough with fury and rage,

Stood the handsome, horrible stranger,
With black and flashing eye,
And torn almost to pieces
Did poor dead Rupert lie !

Oh, sad was all the household,
And we mourned for Rupert long.
The fierce wild shrike was prisoned
In a cage both dark and strong;

And would you like, O children,
His final fate to know?
To Agassiz's Museum
That pirate bird did go!

FERN-SEED

SHE filled her shoes with fern-seed,
This foolish little Nell,
And in the summer sunshine
Went dancing down the dell.
For whoso treads on fern-seed —
So fairy stories tell —
Becomes invisible at once,
So potent is its spell.
A frog mused by the brook-side:
“Can you see me?” she cried;
He leaped across the water,
A flying leap and wide.
“Oh, that’s because I asked him!
I must not speak,” she thought,
And skipping o’er the meadow
The shady wood she sought.

The squirrel chattered on the bough,
 Nor noticed her at all,
The birds sang high, the birds sang low,
 With many a cry and call.
The rabbit nibbled in the grass,
 The snake basked in the sun,
The butterflies, like floating flowers,
 Wavered and gleamed and shone.
The spider in his hammock swung,
 The gay grasshoppers danced ;
And now and then a cricket sung
 And shining beetles glanced.
'T was all because the pretty child
 So softly, softly trod, —
You could not hear a footfall
 Upon the yielding sod.
But she was filled with such delight —
 This foolish little Nell!
And with her fern-seed laden shoes,
 Danced back across the dell.
"I 'll find my mother now," she thought,
 "What fun 't will be to call
'Mamma! Mamma!' while she can see
 No little girl at all!"
She peeped in through the window,
 Mamma sat in a dream:
About the quiet sun-steeped house
 All things asleep did seem.

She stept across the threshold;
So lightly had she crept,
The dog upon the mat lay still,
And still the kitty slept.
Patient beside her mother's knee
To try her wondrous spell
Waiting she stood, till all at once,
Waking, mamma cried "Nell!
Where have you been? why do you gaze
At me with such strange eyes?"
"But can you see me, mother dear?"
Poor Nelly faltering cries.
"See you? why not, my little girl?
Why should mamma be blind?"
And pretty Nell unties her shoes,
With fairy fern-seed lined;
She tosses up into the air
A little powdery cloud,
And frowns upon it as it falls,
And murmurs half aloud,
"It was n't true, a word of it,
About the magic spell!
I never will believe again
What fairy stories tell!"

THE GREAT WHITE OWL

HE sat aloft on the rocky height,
Snow-white above the snow,
In the winter morning calm and bright,
And I gazed at him, below.

He faced the east, where the sunshine streamed
On the singing, sparkling sea,
And he blinked with his yellow eyes, that seemed
All sightless and blank to be.

The snowbirds swept in a whirling crowd
About him gleefully,
And piped and whistled sweet and loud,
But never a plume stirred he.

Singing they passed, and away they flew
Through the brilliant atmosphere;
Cloud-like he sat, with the living blue
Of the sky behind him, clear.

“Give you good-morrow, friend,” I cried.
He wheeled his large round head,
Solemn and stately, from side to side,
But never a word he said.

"O lonely creature, weird and white,
Why are you sitting there,
Like a glimmering ghost from the still midnight,
In the beautiful morning air?"

He spurned the rock with his talons strong,
No human speech brooked he;
Like a snowflake huge he sped along
Swiftly and noiselessly.

His wide, slow-waving wings so white,
Heavy and soft did seem;
Yet rapid as a dream his flight,
And silent as a dream.

And when a distant crag he gained,
Bright-twinkling like a star,
He shook his shining plumes, and deigned
To watch me from afar.

And once again, when the evening-red
Burned dimly in the west,
I saw him motionless, his head
Bent forward on his breast.

Dark and still, 'gainst the sunset sky
Stood out his figure lone;
Crowning the bleak rock far and high,
By sad winds overblown.

Did he dream of the ice-fields, stark and drear ?
Of his haunts on the Arctic shore ?
Or the downy brood in his nest last year
On the coast of Labrador ?

Had he fluttered the Esquimaux huts among ?
How I wished he could speak to me !
Had he sailed on the icebergs, rainbow-hung,
In the open Polar Sea ?

Oh, many a tale he might have told
Of marvelous sounds and sights,
Where the world lies hopeless and dumb with cold,
Through desolate days and nights.

But with folded wings, while the darkness fell,
He sat, nor spake, nor stirred ;
And charmed as if by a subtile spell,
I mused on the wondrous Bird.

THE BLIND LAMB

'T WAS summer, and softly the ocean
Sang, sparkling in light and heat,
And over the water and over the land
The warm south wind blew sweet.

And the children played in the sunshine,
And shouted and scampered in glee

O'er the grassy slopes, or the weed-strewn beach,
Or rocked on the dreaming sea.

They had roamed the whole bright morning,
The troop of merry boys,
And in they flocked at noon tide,
With a clamor of joyful noise.

And they bore among them gently
A wee lamb, white as snow;
And, "O mamma, mamma, he 's blind!
He can't tell where to go.

"And we found him lost and lonely,
And we brought him home to you,
And we 're going to feed him and care for him!"
Cried the eager little crew.

"Look, how he falls over everything!"
And they set him on his feet,
And aimlessly he wandered,
With a low and mournful bleat.

Some sign of pity he seemed to ask,
And he strove to draw more near,
When he felt the touch of a human hand,
Or a kind voice reached his ear.

They tethered him in a grassy space
Hard by the garden gate,
And with sweet fresh milk they fed him,
And cared for him early and late.

But as the golden days went on,
Forgetful the children grew,
They wearied of tending the poor blind lamb;
No longer a plaything new.

And so each day I changed his place
Within the garden fence,
And fed him morn and noon and eve,
And was his Providence.

And he knew the rustle of my gown,
And every lightest tone,
And when he heard me pass, straightway
He followed o'er stock and stone.

One dark and balmy evening,
When the south wind breathed of rain,
I went to lead my pet within,
And found but a broken chain.

And a terror fell upon me,
For round on every side
The circling sea was sending in
The strength of the full flood-tide.

I called aloud and listened,
I knew not where to seek ;
Out of the dark the warm wet wind
Blew soft against my cheek,

And naught was heard but the sound of waves
Crowding against the shore.
Over the dewy grass I ran,
And called aloud once more.

What reached me out of the distance ?
Surely, a piteous bleat !
I threw my long dress over my arm,
And followed with flying feet.

Down to the edge of the water,
Calling again and again,
Answered so clearly, near and more near,
By that tremulous cry of pain !

I crept to the end of the rocky ledge,
Black lay the water wide ;
Up from among the rippling waves
Came the shivering voice that cried.

I could not see, but I answered him ;
And, stretching a rescuing hand,
I felt in the darkness his sea-soaked wool,
And drew him in to the land.

And the poor little creature pressed so close,
Distracted with delight,
While I dried the brine from his dripping fleece
With my apron soft and white.

Close in my arms I gathered him,
More glad than tongue can tell,
And he laid on my shoulder his pretty head;
He knew that all was well.

And I thought as I bore him swiftly back,
Content, close folded thus,
Of the Heavenly Father compassionate,
Whose pity shall succor us.

I thought of the arms of mercy
That clasp the world about,
And that not one of His children
Shall perish in dread and doubt:

For He hears the voices that cry to Him,
And near his love shall draw:
With help and comfort He waits for us,
The Light, and the Life, and the Law!

DUST

HERE is a problem, a wonder for all to see.

Look at this marvelous thing I hold in my hand !
This is a magic surprising, a mystery
Strange as a miracle, harder to understand.

What is it ? Only a handful of earth : to your touch
A dry rough powder you trample beneath your feet,
Dark and lifeless ; but think for a moment, how much
It hides and holds that is beautiful, bitter, or sweet.

Think of the glory of color ! The red of the rose,
Green of the myriad leaves and the fields of grass,
Yellow as bright as the sun where the daffodil blows,
Purple where violets nod as the breezes pass.

Think of the manifold form, of the oak and the vine,
Nut, and fruit, and cluster, and ears of corn ;
Of the anchored water-lily, a thing divine,
Unfolding its dazzling snow to the kiss of morn.

Think of the delicate perfumes borne on the gale,
Of the golden willow catkin's odor of spring,
Of the breath of the rich narcissus waxen-pale,
Of the sweet pea's flight of flowers, of the nettle's
sting.

Strange that this lifeless thing gives vine, flower, tree
Color and shape and character, fragrance too;
That the timber that builds the house, the ship for the
sea,
Out of this powder its strength and its toughness
drew!

That the cocoa among the palms should suck its milk
From this dry dust, while dates from the self-same
soil
Summon their sweet rich fruit: that our shining silk
The mulberry leaves should yield to the worm's
slow toil.

How should the poppy steal sleep from the very source
That grants to the grapevine juice that can madden
or cheer?
How does the weed find food for its fabric coarse
Where the lilies proud their blossoms pure uprear?

Who shall compass or fathom God's thought profound?
We can but praise, for we may not understand;
But there's no more beautiful riddle the whole world
round
Than is hid in this heap of dust I hold in my
hand.

THE SCARECROW

THE farmer looked at his cherry-tree,
With thick buds clustered on every bough;
“I wish I could cheat the robins,” said he;
“If somebody only would show me how!

“I’ll make a terrible scarecrow grim,
With threatening arms and with bristling head,
And up in the tree I’ll fasten him
To frighten them half to death,” he said.

He fashioned a scarecrow tattered and torn—
Oh, ’t was a horrible thing to see!
And very early, one summer morn,
He set it up in his cherry-tree.

The blossoms were white as the light sea-foam,
The beautiful tree was a lovely sight,
But the scarecrow stood there so much at home
All the birds flew screaming away in fright.

The robins, who watched him every day,
Heads held aslant, keen eyes so bright!
Surveying the monster, began to say,
“Why should this monster our prospects blight?

"He never moves round for the roughest weather,
He 's a harmless, comical, tough old fellow;
Let 's all go into the tree together,
For he won't budge till the fruit is mellow!"

So up they flew; and the sauciest pair
Mid the shady branches peered and perked,
Selected a spot with the utmost care,
And all day merrily sang and worked.

And where do you think they built their nest?
In the scarecrow's pocket, if you please,
That, half-concealed on his ragged breast,
Made a charming covert of safety and ease!

By the time the cherries were ruby-red,
A thriving family, hungry and brisk,
The whole long day on the ripe fruit fed;
'T was so convenient! They ran no risk!

Until the children were ready to fly,
All undisturbed they lived in the tree;
For nobody thought to look at the Guy
For a robin's flourishing family!

THE CRADLE

THE barn was low and dim and old,
Broad on the floor the sunshine slept,
And through the windows and the doors
Swift in and out the swallows swept.

And breezes from the summer sea
Drew through, and stirred the fragrant hay
Down-dropping from the loft, wherein
A gray old idle fish-net lay

Heaped in a corner, and one loop
Hung loose the dry, sweet grass among,
And hammock-wise to all the winds
It floated to and fro, and swung.

And there one day the children brought
The pet of all the house to play;
A baby boy of three years old,
And sweeter than the dawn of day.

They laid him in the dropping loop,
And softly swung him, till at last
Over his beauty balmy Sleep
Its delicate enchantment cast.

And then they ran to call us all:

“Come, see where little Rob is! Guess!”
And brought us where the darling lay,
A heap of rosy loveliness

Curled in the net: the dim old place
He brightened; like a star he shone
Cradled in air; we stood as once
The shepherds of Judea had done.

And while adoring him we gazed,
With eyes that gathered tender dew,
Wrathful upon the gentle scene
His Celtic nurse indignant flew.

“Is this a fit place for the child?”
And out of his delicious sleep
She clutched him, muttering as she went,
Her scorn and wonder, low and deep.

His father smiled, and drew aside;
A grave, sweet look was in his face,
“For One, who in a manger lay,
It was not found too poor a place!”

MARCH

I WONDER what spendthrift chose to spill
Such bright gold under my window-sill!
Is it fairy gold? Does it glitter still?
Bless me! it is but a daffodil!

And look at the crocuses, keeping tryst
With the daffodil by the sunshine kissed!
Like beautiful bubbles of amethyst
They seem, blown out of the earth's snow-mist.

And snowdrops, delicate, fairy bells,
With a pale green tint like the ocean swells;
And the hyacinths weaving their perfumed spells!
The ground is a rainbow of asphodels!

Who said that March was a scold and a shrew?
Who said she had nothing on earth to do
But tempests and furies and rages to brew?
Why, look at the wealth she has lavished on you!

O March that blusters and March that blows,
What color under your footsteps glows!
Beauty you summon from winter snows,
And you are the pathway that leads to the rose.

THE SHAG

“WHAT is that great bird, sister, tell me,
Perched high on the top of the crag ?”
“’T is the cormorant, dear little brother ;
The fishermen call it the shag.”

“But what does it there, sister, tell me,
Sitting lonely against the black sky ?”
“It has settled to rest, little brother ;
It hears the wild gale wailing high.”

“But I am afraid of it, sister,
For over the sea and the land
It gazes, so black and so silent !”
“Little brother, hold fast to my hand.”

“Oh, what was that, sister ? The thunder ?
Did the shag bring the storm and the cloud,
The wind and the rain and the lightning ?”
“Little brother, the thunder roars loud.

“Run fast, for the rain sweeps the ocean ;
Look ! over the light-house it streams ;
And the lightning leaps red, and above us
The gulls fill the air with their screams.”

O'er the beach, o'er the rocks, running swiftly,
The little white cottage they gain;
And safely they watch from the window
The dance and the rush of the rain.

But the shag kept his place on the headland,
And when the brief storm had gone by,
He shook his loose plumes, and they saw him
Rise splendid and strong in the sky.

Clinging fast to the gown of his sister,
The little boy laughed as he flew;
“He is gone with the wind and the lightning!
And — I am not frightened, — are you ?”

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER AND LITTLE JOAN

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER, one bright day,
Was walking down the glen,
A noble English soldier,
And the handsomest of men.

Among the fragrant hedgerows
He slowly wandered down,
Through blooming field and meadow,
By pleasant Freshford town.

With look and mien magnificent
And step so grand moved he!
And from his stately front outshone
Beauty and majesty.

About his strong white forehead
The rich locks thronged and curled
Above the splendor of his eyes
That might command the world!

A sound of bitter weeping
Came up to his quick ear,
He paused that instant, bending
His kingly head to hear.

Among the grass and daisies
Sat wretched little Joan,
And near her lay a bowl of delf
Broken upon a stone.

Her cheeks were red with crying,
And her blue eyes dull and dim,
And she turned her pretty woeful face
All tear-stained up to him.

Scarce six years old and sobbing
In misery so drear!
“Why, what’s the matter, Posy?”
He said, “Come, tell me, dear.”

“It’s father’s bowl I’ve broken,
‘T was for his dinner kept:
I took it safe, but coming home
It fell,” — again she wept.

“But you can mend it, can’t you?”
Cried the despairing child
With sudden hope, as down on her
Like some kind god he smiled.

“Don’t cry, poor little Posy!
I cannot make it whole,
But I can give you sixpence
To buy another bowl.”

He sought in vain for silver
In purse and pockets too,
And found but golden guineas;
He pondered what to do.

“This time to-morrow, Posy,”
He said, “again come here,
And I will bring your sixpence,
I promise! Never fear!”

Away went Joan rejoicing,
A rescued child was she,
And home went good Sir William,
And to him presently

A footman brings a letter,
 And low before him bends,
 “Will not Sir William come and dine
 To-morrow with his friends ? ”

The letter read, “And we ’ve secured
 The man among all men
 You wish to meet ! He will be here ;
 You will not fail us then ? ”

To-morrow ! could he get to Bath
 And dine with Dukes and Earls
 And back in time ? That hour was pledged —
 It was the little girl’s !

He could not disappoint her,
 He must his friend refuse,
 So “a previous engagement ”
 He pleaded as excuse.

Next day when she, all eager,
 Came o’er the fields so fair,
 Not surer of the sunrise
 Than that she should find him there,

He met her, and the sixpence
 Laid in her little hand.
 Her woe was ended, and her heart
 The lightest in the land.

How would the stately company
Who had so much desired
His presence at their splendid feast,
Have wondered and admired!

As soldier, scholar, gentleman,
His praises oft are heard —
'T was not the least of his great deeds
So to have kept his word.

BLUEBIRDS IN AUTUMN

THE morning was gray and cloudy,
And over the fading land
Autumn was casting the withered leaves
Abroad with a lavish hand.

Sad lay the tawny pastures,
Where the grass was brown and dry;
And the far-off hills were blurred with mist,
Under the sombre sky.

The frost already had fallen,
No bird seemed left to sing;
And I sighed to think of the tempests
Between us and the spring.

But the woodbine yet was scarlet
Where it found a place to cling;
And the old dead weeping-willow
Was draped like a splendid king.

Suddenly out of the heavens,
Like sapphire sparks of light,
A flock of bluebirds swept and lit
In the woodbine garlands bright.

The tree was alive in a moment
With motion, color, and song;
How gorgeous the flash of their azure wings
The blood-red leaves among!

Beautiful, brilliant creatures!
What sudden delight they brought
Into the pallid morning,
Rebuking my dreary thought!

Only a few days longer,
And they would have flown, to find
The wonderful, vanished summer,
Leaving darkness and cold behind.

Oh, to flee from the bitter weather,
The winter's buffets and shocks,—
To borrow their strong, light pinions,
And follow their shining flocks!

While they sought for the purple berries,
So eager and bright and glad,
I watched them, dreaming of April,
Ashamed to have been so sad.

And I thought, "Though I cannot follow them,
I can patiently endure,
And make the best of the snowstorms,
And that is something more.

"And when I see them returning,
All heaven to earth they 'll bring;
And my joy will be the deeper,
For I shall have earned the spring."

TRAGEDY

"You queer little wonderful owlet! you atom so fluffy
and small!
Half a handful of feathers and two great eyes — how
came you alive at all?
And why do you sit here blinking as blind as a bat in
the light,
With your pale eyes bigger than saucers? Now who
ever saw such a sight!

"And what ails chickadee, tell me! what makes him
flutter and scream

Round and over you where you sit like a tiny ghost in
a dream?

I thought him a sensible fellow, quite steady and calm
and wise,

But only see how he hops and flits, and hear how
wildly he cries!

"What is the matter, you owlet? You will not be
frightened away!—

Do you mean on that twig of a lilac-bush the whole
night long to stay?

Are you bewitching my chickadee-dee? I really be-
lieve that you are!

I wish you'd go off, you strange brown bird—oh,
ever and ever so far!

"I fear you are weaving and winding some kind of a
dreadful charm;

If I leave poor chickadee-dee with you, I'm sure he
will come to harm.

But what can I do? We can't stay here forever
together, we three—

One anxious child, and an owlet weird, and a fright-
ened chickadee-dee!"

I could not frighten the owl away, and chickadee
would not come,

So I just ran off with a heavy heart, and told my
mother at home;

But when my brothers and sisters went the curious
sight to see,

The owl was gone, and there lay on the ground *two feathers* of chickadee-dee!

JACK FROST

RUSTILY creak the crickets: Jack Frost came down
last night,

He slid to the earth on a starbeam, keen and sparkling
and bright;

He sought in the grass for the crickets with delicate
icy spear,

So sharp and fine and fatal, and he stabbed them far
and near.

Only a few stout fellows, thawed by the morning sun,
Chirrup a mournful echo of by-gone frolic and fun.

But yesterday such a rippling chorus ran all over the
land,

Over the hills and the valleys, down to the gray sea-
sand,

Millions of merry harlequins, skipping and dancing in
glee,

Cricket and locust and grasshopper, happy as happy
could be:

Scooping rich caves in ripe apples, and feeding on
honey and spice,

Drunk with the mellow sunshine, nor dreaming of
spears of ice!

Was it not enough that the crickets your weapon of power should pierce?

Pray what have you done to the flowers? Jack Frost, you are cruel and fierce.

With never a sign or a whisper, you kissed them, and lo, they exhale

Their beautiful lives; they are drooping, their sweet color ebbs, they are pale,

They fade and they die! See the pansies, yet striving so hard to unfold

Their garments of velvety splendor, all Tyrian purple and gold.

But how weary they look, and how withered, like handsome court dames, who all night

Have danced at the ball till the sunrise struck chill to their hearts with its light.

Where hides the wood-aster? She vanished as snow-wreaths dissolve in the sun

The moment you touched her. Look yonder, where, sober and gray as a nun,

The maple-tree stands that at sunset was blushing as red as the sky;

At its foot, glowing scarlet as fire, its robes of magnificence lie.

Despoiler! stripping the world as you strip the shivering tree

Of color and sound and perfume, scaring the bird and the bee,

Turning beauty to ashes, — oh, to join the swift swallows and fly

Far away out of sight of your mischief! I give you no welcome, not I!

A LULLABY

SLEEP, my darling, sleep!

Thunders the pitiless storm;
Fiercely at window and door
Wrestle the winds and roar:
Thy slumber is deep and warm.

Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Sleep, my baby, sleep!

Over thy beautiful head,
Lightly, softly, and close,
Sweeter than lily or rose,
Thy mother's kisses are shed.

Sleep, my baby, sleep!

Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Safe in these arms, my own,
Summer shall wrap thee round;
Never harsh touch or sound
Break through that charmèd zone.

Sleep, then, darling, sleep!

Sleep, my angel, sleep!
Nestle against my heart,
Sunk in a golden calm,—
Delicate, breathing of balm,
All my heaven thou art,
Sleep, my angel, sleep!

APRIL AND MAY

I. APRIL

BIRDS on the boughs before the buds
Begin to burst in the Spring,
Bending their heads to the April floods,
Too much out of breath to sing!

They chirp, “Hey-day! How the rain comes down!
Comrades, cuddle together!
Cling to the bark so rough and brown,
For this is April weather.

“Oh, the warm, beautiful, drenching rain!
I don’t mind it, do you?
Soon will the sky be clear again,
Smiling, and fresh, and blue.

“Sweet and sparkling is every drop
That slides from the soft, gray clouds;

Blossoms will blush to the very top
Of the bare old tree in crowds.

“Oh, the warm, delicious, hopeful rain!
Let us be glad together.
Summer comes flying in beauty again,
Through the fitful April weather.”

II. MAY

Skies are glowing in gold and blue;
What did the brave birds say?
Plenty of sunshine to come, they knew,
In the pleasant month of May!

She calls a breeze from the South to blow,
And breathe on the boughs so bare,
And straight they are laden with rosy snow,
And there's honey and spice in the air!

Oh, the glad, green leaves! Oh, the happy wind!
Oh, delicate fragrance and balm!
Storm and tumult are left behind
In a rapture of golden calm.

From dewy morning to starry night
The birds sing sweet and strong,
That the radiant sky is filled with light,
That the days are fair and long.

That bees are drowsy about the hive—
Earth is so warm and gay!
And 't is joy enough to be alive
In the heavenly month of May!

ROBIN'S RAIN-SONG

O ROBIN, pipe no more of rain,
'T is four days since we saw the sun,
And still the misty window-pane
Is loud with drops that leap and run.

Four days ago the sky was clear,
But when my mother heard you call,
She said, "That's Robin's rain-song, dear:
Oh, well he knows when rain will fall!"

Fair was the morning, and I wept
Because she would not let me stray
Into the woods for flowers, but kept
My feet from wandering away.

And I was vexed to hear you cry
So sweetly of the coming storm,
And watched with brimming eyes the sky
Grow cold and dim from clear and warm.

It seemed to me you brought it all
With that incessant, plaintive note;
And still you call the drops to fall
Upon your brown and scarlet coat.

How nice to be a bird like you,
And let the rain come pattering down,
Nor mind a bit to be wet through,
Nor fear to spoil one's only gown!

But since I cannot be a bird,
Sweet Robin, pipe no more of rain!
Your merrier music is preferred;
Forget at last that sad refrain!

And tell us of the sunshine, dear —
I'm wild to be abroad again,
Seeking for blossoms far and near:
O Robin, pipe no more of rain!

A SONG OF EASTER

SING, children, sing!
And the lily censers swing;
Sing that life and joy are waking and that Death no
more is king.
Sing the happy, happy tumult of the slowly brighten-
ing Spring;
Sing, little children, sing!

Sing, children, sing!
Winter wild has taken wing.

Fill the air with the sweet tidings till the frosty echoes
ring!

Along the eaves the icicles no longer glittering cling,
And the crocus in the garden lifts its bright face to
the sun,

And in the meadows softly the brooks begin to run,
And the golden catkins swing
In the warm airs of the Spring;
Sing, little children, sing!

Sing, children, sing!

The lilies white you bring

In the joyous Easter morning for hope are blossoming;
And as the earth her shroud of snow from off her
breast doth fling,

So may we cast our fetters off in God's eternal Spring.
So may we find release at last from sorrow and from
pain,

So may we find our childhood's calm, delicious dawn
again.

Sweet are your eyes, O little ones, that look with
smiling grace,

Without a shade of doubt or fear into the future's face!

Sing, sing in happy chorus, with joyful voices tell
That death is life, and God is good, and all things
shall be well;

That bitter days shall cease
In warmth and light and peace,
That Winter yields to Spring, —
Sing, little children, sing!

PERSEVERANCE

OUT I went in the morning, to look at my garden gay:
Everything shone with the dewdrops that sparkling
and trembling lay
Scattered to left and to right, and the webs of the
spiders were hung
Thickly with pearls and diamonds; light in the wind
they swung.

Down in a corner, my sunflower, tall as a lilac-tree,
Shook out his tattered golden flags, and bowed and
nodded to me.
Rather heavy-headed was he, for that I did not care,
For he blazed all over with flowers, though rather the
worse for wear.

And under the sunflower, on the fence, a little brown
bird sat,
Trying to sing; you never heard such a queer little
song as that!
A soft brown baby sparrow, without any tail at all,
Trying his voice as he sat alone beneath the sunflower
tall.

He could n't sing in the least, you know ; he quavered
and quavered again,

Seeking so hard to recollect his father's beautiful
strain !

But his young voice was hoarse and weak ; he could
not find the tune

He used to hear above the nest in the happy days of
June.

But not at all was he daunted ; he warbled it o'er and
o'er,

And every time I thought it grew more comical than
before.

The very sunflower seemed to laugh at the fluffy little
bird,

His broad, bright faces seemed to say, "Was ever such
music heard ! "

I said, "Never mind, my darling ; you 'll conquer it
by and by,

For never baby or bird could fail, with so much cour-
age to try ! "

So I left him there, still singing, and I heard him
every day

Doing bravely his little best, till winter drove him
away.

The dear bird and the golden flower! I mourned
when chilly snow
Sent south the small musician and laid the sunflower
low.
But I was sure, when in the spring the sparrows
should return,
His singing would be perfect, for he strove so hard to
learn.

RESCUED

"LITTLE lad, slow wandering across the sands so yellow,
Leading safe a lassie small, — oh, tell me, little fellow,
Whither go you loitering in the summer weather,
Chattering like sweet-voiced birds on a bough together?"

"I am Robert, if you please, and this is Rose, my sister,
Youngest of us all," — he bent his curly head and
kissed her;
"Every day we come and wait here till the sun is
setting,
Watching for our father's ship, for mother dear is
fretting.

"Long ago he sailed away out of sight and hearing,
Straight across the bay he went, into sunset steering.
Every day we look for him, and hope for his returning,
Every night my mother keeps the candle for him
burning.

"Summer goes and Winter comes, and Spring returns,
but never
Father's step comes to the gate. Oh! is he gone for-
ever?
The great grand ship that bore him off, think you some
tempest wrecked her?"
Tears shone in little Rose's eyes, upturned to her
protector.

Eagerly the bonny boy went on: "Oh, sir, look yon-
der!
In the offing see the sails that east and westward
wander;
Every hour they come and go, the misty distance
thronging,
While we watch and see them fade, with sorrow and
with longing."

"Little Robert! little Rose!" The stranger's eyes
were glistening,
At his bronzed and bearded face upgazed the children,
listening;

He knelt upon the yellow sand, and clasped them to
his bosom,
Robert brave, and little Rose, as bright as any blos-
som.

“Father! Father! Is it you?” The still air rings
with rapture;
All the vanished joy of years the waiting ones recap-
ture!
Finds he welcome wild and sweet, the low-thatched
cottage reaching,
But the ship that into sunset steered upon the rocks
lies bleaching.

THE COCKATOOS

EMPTY the throne-chair stood; mayhap
The king was taking his royal nap,
For early it was in the afternoon
Of a drowsy day in the month of June.

And the palace doors were open wide
To the soft and dreamful airs outside,
And the blue sky burned with the summer glow,
And the trees cool masses of shade did throw.

The throne-chair stood in a splendid room.
There were velvets in ruby and purple bloom,

Curtains magnificent to see,
And a table draped most sumptuously.

And on the table a cushion lay
Colored like clouds at the close of day,
And a crown, rich-sparkling with myriad rays,
Shone on the top, in a living blaze.

And nobody spoke and nobody stirred
Except a bird that sat by a bird, —
Two cockatoos on a lofty perch,
Sober and grave as monks in a church.

Gay with the glory of painted plume,
Their bright hues suited the brilliant room;
Green and yellow, and rose and blue,
Scarlet and orange, and jet black, too.

Said one to the other, eying askance
The beautiful *fleur-de-lis* of France
On the cushion's lustrous edge, set round
In gleaming gold on a violet ground, —

Said one to the other, “Rocco, my dear,
If any thief were to enter here,
He might take crown and cushion away,
And who would be any the wiser, pray? ”

Said Rocco, "How stupid, my dear Coquette!
A guard is at every threshold set;
No thief could enter, much less get out,
Without the sentinel's warning shout."

She tossed her head, did the bright Coquette.
"Rocco, my dear, now what will you bet
That the guards are not sleeping this moment as sound
As the king himself, all the palace round ?

"'T is very strange, so it seems to me,
That they leave things open so carelessly ;
Really, I think it 's a little absurd
All this should be left to the care of a bird !

"And what is that creaking so light and queer ?
Listen a moment. There ! Don't you hear ?
And what is that moving the curtain behind ?
Rocco, my dear, are you deaf and blind ?"

The heavy curtain was pushed away
And a shaggy head, unkempt and gray,
From the costly folds looked doubtful out,
And eagerly everywhere peered about.

And the dull eyes lighted upon the blaze
Of the gorgeous crown with a startled gaze,
And out of the shadow the figure stepped
And softly over the carpet crept.

And nobody spoke and nobody stirred,
And the one bird sat by the other bird,
Both overpowered by their surprise;
They really could n't believe their eyes!

Swiftly the madman, in fear's despite,
Darted straight to that hill of light;
The frightened birds saw the foolish wretch
His hand to the wondrous thing outstretch.

Then both at once such an uproar raised
That the king himself rushed in, amazed,
Half awake, in his dressing-gown,
And there on the floor lay the sacred crown!

And he caught a glimpse through the portal wide
Of a pair of flying heels outside,
And he shouted in royal wrath, "What ho!
Where are my people, I 'd like to know!"

They ran to the rescue in terror great.
"Is this the way that you guard my state?
Had it not been for my cockatoos
My very crown I had chanced to lose!"

They sought in the shrubbery to and fro,
Wherever they thought the thief might go;
They looked through the garden, but all in vain,
They searched the forest, they scoured the plain.

They gave it up, for they could not choose.
But oh, the pride of those cockatoos!
If they were admired and petted before,
Now they were utterly spoiled, be sure!

They'd a special servant on them to wait,
To do their pleasure early and late:
They grew so haughty and proud and grand,
Their fame was spread over all the land.

And when they died it made such a stir!
And their skins were stuffed with spice and myrrh.
And from their perch they still look down,
As on the day when they saved the crown.

THE DOUBLE SUNFLOWER

THE sunflowers hung their banners out in the sweet
September weather;
A stately company they stood by the garden fence to-
gether,
And looked out on the shining sea that bright and
brighter grew,
And slowly bowed their golden heads to every wind
that blew.

But the double sunflower bloomed apart, far prouder
than the rest,

And by his crown's majestic weight he seemed almost oppressed.

He held himself aloof upon his tall and slender stem,
And gloried in the splendor of his double diadem.

All clothed in bells of lovely blue, a morning-glory
vine

Could find no friendly stick or stalk about which she
might twine;

And prone upon the ground near by, with blossoms
red as fire,

A scarlet runner lay for lack of means to clamber
higher.

They both perceived the sunflower tall who proudly
stood aside;

Nothing to them was his grand air of majesty and
pride;

With one accord they charged at him, and up his stalk
they ran,

And straight to hang their red and blue all over him
began.

Oh, then he was magnificent, all azure, gold, and
flame!

But, woe is me! an autumn breeze from out the north-
west came;

With all their leaves and flowers the vines about him
closely wound,

And with that keen wind's help at once they dragged
him to the ground.

I found him there next morning, his pomp completely
wrecked,

His prostrate form all gorgeously with tattered blooms
bedecked.

“Alas!” I said, “no power on earth your glory can
recall!

Did you not know, dear sunflower, that pride must
have a fall?”

I raised him up and bore him in, and, ere he faded
quite,

In the corner he stood splendid awhile for our delight;
But his humbler, single brethren, in the garden, every
one,

With shining disks and golden rays stayed gazing at
the sun.

IN THE BLACK FOREST

UP through the great Black Forest,
So wild and wonderful,

We climbed in the autumn afternoon
'Mid the shadows deep and cool.

We climbed to the Grand Duke's castle
That stood on the airy height;
Above the leagues of pine-trees dark
It shone in the yellow light.

We saw how the peasant women
Were toiling along the way,
In open spaces here and there,
That steeped in the sunshine lay.

They gathered the autumn harvest —
All toil-worn and weather-browned;
They gathered the roots they had planted in spring,
And piled them up on the ground.

We heard the laughter of children,
And merrily down the road
Ran little Max with a rattling cart,
Heaped up with a heavy load.

Upon orange carrots, and beets so red,
And turnips smooth and white,
With leaves of green all packed between,
Sat the little Rosel bright.

Around the edge of her wee white cap
The wind blew out her curls —

A sweeter face I have never seen
Than this happy little girl's.

A spray of the carrot's foliage fine,
Soft as a feather of green,
Drooped over her head from behind her ear
As proud as the plume of a queen.

Light was his burden to merry Max,
With Rosel perched above,
And he gazed at her on that humble throne
With eyes of pride and love.

With joyful laughter they passed us by,
As up through the forest of pine,
So solemn and still, we made our way
To the castle of Eberstein.

Oh, vast and dim and beautiful
Were the dark woods' shadowy aisles,
And all their silent depths seemed lit
With the children's golden smiles.

Oh, lofty the Grand Duke's castle
That looked o'er the forest gloom;
But better I love to remember
The children's rosy bloom.

And sweet is the picture I brought away
From the wild Black Forest shade,
Of proud and happy and merry Max,
And Rosel, the little maid.

AN OLD SAW

A DEAR little maid came skipping out
In the glad new day, with a merry shout;
With dancing feet and flying hair
She sang with joy in the morning air.

“Don’t sing before breakfast, you ’ll cry before night !”

What a croak, to darken the child’s delight!
And the stupid old nurse, again and again,
Repeated the ancient, dull refrain.

The child paused, trying to understand;
But her eyes saw the great world rainbow-spanned:
Her light little feet hardly touched the earth,
And her soul brimmed over with innocent mirth.

“Never mind, — don’t listen, O sweet little maid!
Make sure of your morning song,” I said;
“And if pain must meet you, why, all the more
Be glad of the rapture that came before.”

CRADLE SONG

IN the wingèd cradle of sleep I lay
My darling gently down;
Kissed and closed are his eyes of gray,
Under his curls' bright crown.

Where, oh, where, will he fly and float,
In the wingèd cradle of sleep?
Whom will he meet in the worlds remote,
While he slumbers soft and deep?

Warm and sweet as a white blush rose,
His small hand lies in mine,
But I cannot follow him where he goes,
And he gives no word nor sign.

Keep him safe, ye heavenly powers,
In dreamland vast and dim,
Let no ill, through the night's long hours,
Come nigh to trouble him.

Give him back, when the dawn shall break,
With his matchless baby charms,
With his love and his beauty all awake,
Into my happy arms!

MARJORIE

MARJORIE hides in the deep, sweet grass;
Purple its tops bend over;
Softly and warmly the breezes pass,
And bring her the scent of the clover.

Butterflies flit, and the banded bee
Booms in the air above her;
Green and golden lady-bugs three
Marjorie's nest discover.

Up to the top of the grass so tall
Creep they while Marjorie gazes;
Blows the wind suddenly, — down they fall
Into the disks of the daisies!

Brown-eyed Marjorie! Who, do you think,
Sings in the sun so loudly?
Marjorie smiles. “ ’T is the bobolink,
Caroling gayly and proudly.”

Bright-locked Marjorie! What floats down
Through the golden air, and lingers
Light on your head as a cloudy crown,
Pink as your rosy fingers?

“Apple-blossoms!” she laughing cries,
“Beautiful boats come sailing
Out of the branches held up to the skies,
Over the orchard railing.”

Happy, sweet Marjorie, hidden away,
Birds, butterflies, bees above her;
With flowers and perfumes, and lady-bugs gay;
Everything seems to love her!

KING MIDAS

HEARD you, O little children,
This wonderful story told
Of the Phrygian king whose fatal touch
Turned everything to gold?

In a great, dim, dreary chamber,
Beneath the palace floor,
He counted his treasures of glittering coin,
And he always longed for more.

When the clouds in the blaze of sunset
Burned flaming fold on fold,
He thought how fine a thing 't would be
Were they but real gold!

And when his dear little daughter,
The child he loved so well,
Came bringing in from the pleasant fields
The yellow asphodel,

Or buttercups from the meadow,
Or dandelions gay,
King Midas would look at the blossoms sweet,
And she would hear him say, —

“If only the flowers were really
Golden as they appear,
’Twere worth your while to gather them,
My little daughter dear!”

One day in the dim, drear chamber,
As he counted his treasure o’er,
A sunbeam slipped through a chink in the wall
And quivered down to the floor.

“Would it were gold,” he muttered,
“That broad bright yellow bar!”
Suddenly stood in its mellow light,
A figure bright as a star.

Young and ruddy and glorious,
With face as fresh as the day,
With a wingèd cap and wingèd heels,
And eyes both wise and gay.

“Oh, have your wish, King Midas,”
A heavenly voice begun,
Like all sweet notes of the morning
Braided and blended in one.

“And when to-morrow’s sunrise
Wakes you with rosy fire,
All things you touch shall turn to gold,
Even as you desire.”

King Midas slept. The morning
At last stole up the sky,
And woke him, full of eagerness
The wondrous spell to try.

And lo! the bed ’s fine draperies
Of linen fair and cool,
Of quilted satin and cobweb lace,
And blankets of snowy wool,

All had been changed with the sun’s first ray
To marvelous cloth of gold,
That rippled and shimmered as soft as silk
In many a gorgeous fold.

But all this splendor weighed so much
’T was irksome to the king,
And up he sprang to try at once
The touch on everything.

The heavy tassel that he grasped
Magnificent became,
And hung by the purple curtain rich
Like a glowing mass of flame.

At every step, on every side,
Such splendor followed him,
The very sunbeams seemed to pale,
And morn itself grow dim.

But when he came to the water
For his delicious bath,
And dipped his hand in the surface smooth,
He started in sudden wrath;

For the liquid, light and leaping,
So crystal-bright and clear,
Grew a solid lake of heavy gold,
And the king began to fear!

But out he went to the garden,
So fresh in the morning hour,
And a thousand buds in the balmy night
Had burst into perfect flower.

'T was a world of perfume and color,
Of tender and delicate bloom,
But only the hideous thirst for wealth
In the king's heart found room.

He passed like a spirit of autumn
Through that fair space of bloom,
And the leaves and the flowers grew yellow
In a dull and senseless gloom.

Back to the lofty palace
Went the glad monarch then,
And sat at his sumptuous breakfast,
Most fortunate of men!

He broke the fine, white wheaten roll,
The light and wholesome bread,
And it turned to a lump of metal rich —
It had as well been lead!

Again did fear assail the king,
When — what was this he heard ?
The voice of his little daughter dear,
As sweet as a grieving bird.

Sobbing she stood before him,
And a golden rose held she,
And the tears that brimmed her blue, blue eyes
Were pitiful to see.

“Father ! O father dearest !
This dreadful thing — oh, see !
Oh, what has happened to all the flowers ?
Tell me, what can it be ? ”

“Why should you cry, my daughter?
Are not these blossoms of gold
Beautiful, precious, and wonderful,
With splendor not to be told?”

“I hate them, O my father!
They’re stiff and hard and dead,
That were so sweet and soft and fair,
And blushed so warm and red.”

“Come here,” he cried, “my darling,”
And bent, her cheek to kiss,
To comfort her — when — Heavenly Powers!
What fearful thing was this?

He sank back, shuddering and aghast,
But she stood still as death —
A statue of horrible gleaming gold,
With neither motion nor breath.

The gold tears hardened on her cheek,
The gold rose in her hand,
Even her little sandals changed
To gold, where she did stand.

Then such a tumult of despair
The wretched king possessed,
He wrung his hands, and tore his hair,
And sobbed, and beat his breast.

Weighed with one look from her sweet eyes
What was the whole world worth ?
Against one touch of her loving lips,
The treasure of all the earth ?

Then came that voice, like music,
As fresh as the morning air,
“How is it with you, King Midas,
Rich in your answered prayer ?”

And there, in the sunshine smiling,
Majestic as before,
Ruddy and young and glorious,
The Stranger stood once more.

“Take back your gift so terrible !
No blessing, but a curse !
One loving heart more precious is
Than the gold of the universe.”

The Stranger listened — a sweeter smile
Kindled his grave, bright eyes.
“Glad am I, O King Midas,
That you have grown so wise !

“Again your wish is granted ;
More swiftly than before,
All you have harmed with the fatal touch
You shall again restore.”

He clasped his little daughter —
 Oh, joy! — within his arms
She trembled back to her human self,
 With all her human charms.

Across her face he saw the life
 Beneath his kiss begin,
And steal to the charming dimple deep
 Upon her lovely chin.

Again her eyes grew blue and clear,
 Again her cheek flushed red;
She locked her arms about his neck,
 “My father dear!” she said.

Oh, happy was King Midas,
 Against his heart to hold
His treasure of love, more precious
 Than a thousand worlds of gold!

WILD GEESE

THE wind blows, the sun shines, the birds sing loud,
The blue, blue sky is flecked with fleecy dappled cloud,
Over earth's rejoicing fields the children dance and
 sing,
And the frogs pipe in chorus, “It is spring! It is
 spring!”

The grass comes, the flower laughs where lately lay
the snow,
O'er the breezy hill-top hoarsely calls the crow,
By the flowing river the alder catkins swing,
And the sweet song sparrow cries, "Spring! It is
spring!"

Hark, what a clamor goes winging through the sky!
Look, children! Listen to the sound so wild and
high!
Like a peal of broken bells, — kling, clang, kling, —
Far and high the wild geese cry, "Spring! It is
spring!"

Bear the winter off with you, O wild geese dear!
Carry all the cold away, far away from here;
Chase the snow into the north, O strong of heart and
wing,
While we share the robin's rapture, crying, "Spring!
It is spring!"

THE HYLAS

IN the crimson sunsets of the spring,
Children, have you heard the hylas pipe,
Ere with robin's note the meadows ring,
Ere the silver willow buds are ripe?

Long before the swallow dares appear,
When the April weather frees the brooks,
Sweet and high a liquid note you hear,
Sounding clear at eve from wooded nooks.

'T is the hylas. "What are hylas, pray ?"
Do you ask me, little children sweet ?
They are tree-toads, brown and green and gray,
Small and slender, dusky, light, and fleet.

All the winter long they hide and sleep
In the dark earth's bosom, safe and fast ;
When the sunshine finds them, up they leap,
Glad to feel that spring is come at last.

Glad and grateful, up the trees they climb,
Pour their cheerful music on the air,
Crying, "Here 's an end of snow and rime !
Beauty is beginning everywhere !"

Listen, children, for so sweet a cry !
Listen till you hear the hylas sing,
Ere the first star glitters in the sky,
In the crimson sunsets of the spring.

THE SPARROWS

[DIE SPURVER]

IN the far-off land of Norway,
Where the winter lingers late,
And long for the singing-birds and flowers
The little children wait;

When at last the summer ripens
And the harvest is gathered in,
And food for the bleak, drear days to come
The toiling people win;

Through all the land the children
In the golden fields remain
Till their busy little hands have gleaned
A generous sheaf of grain;

All the stalks by the reapers forgotten
They glean to the very least,
To save till the cold December,
For the sparrows' Christmas feast.

And then through the frost-locked country
There happens a wonderful thing:
The sparrows flock north, south, east, west,
For the children's offering.

Of a sudden, the day before Christmas,
The twittering crowds arrive,
And the bitter, wintry air at once
With their chirping is all alive.

They perch upon roof and gable,
On porch and fence and tree,
They flutter about the windows
And peer in curiously.

And meet the eyes of the children,
Who eagerly look out
With cheeks that bloom like roses red,
And greet them with welcoming shout.

On the joyous Christmas morning,
In front of every door
A tall pole, crowned with clustering grain,
Is set the birds before.

And which are the happiest, truly
It would be hard to tell;
The sparrows who share in the Christmas cheer,
Or the children who love them well!

How sweet that they should remember,
With faith so full and sure,
That the children's bounty awaited them
The whole wide country o'er!

When this pretty story was told me
By one who had helped to rear
The rustling grain for the merry birds
In Norway, many a year,

I thought that our little children
Would like to know it too,
It seems to me so beautiful,
So blessed a thing to do,

To make God's innocent creatures see
In every child a friend,
And on our faithful kindness
So fearlessly depend.

THE NIGHTINGALE

THERE is a bird, a plain, brown bird,
That dwells in lands afar,
Whose wild, delicious song is heard
With evening's first white star.

When, dewy-fresh and still, the night
Steals to the waiting world,
And the new moon glitters silver bright,
And the fluttering winds are furled;

When the balm of summer is in the air,
And the deep rose breathes of musk,

And there comes a waft of blossoms fair
Through the enchanted dusk;

Then breaks the silence a heavenly strain,
And thrills the quiet night
With a rich and wonderful refrain,
A rapture of delight.

All listeners that rare music hail,
All whisper softly: "Hark!
It is the matchless nightingale
Sweet singing in the dark."

He has no pride of feathers fine;
Unconscious, too, is he,
That welcomed as a thing divine
Is his clear minstrelsy.

But from the fullness of his heart
His happy carol pours;
Beyond all praise, above all art,
His song to heaven soars.

And through the whole wide world his fame
Is sounded far and near;
Men love to speak his very name
That brown bird is so dear.

GOLD LOCKS AND SILVER LOCKS

PUPIL and master together,
The wise man and the child,
Merrily talking and laughing
Under the lamplight mild.

Pupil and master together,
A fair sight to behold,
With his thronging locks of silver
And her tresses of ruddy gold.

“Well, little girl, did you practice
On the violin to-day ?
What is the air I gave you ?
Have you forgotten, pray ?”

And he sings a few notes and pauses,
Half frowning to see her stand
Perplexed, with her white brows knitted,
And her chin upon her hand.

Far off in the street of a sudden
Comes the sound of a wandering band,
And the blare of brass rings faintly,
Too distant to understand.

“Hark!” says the master, smiling,
Bending his head to hear,
“In what key are they playing?
Can you tell me that, my dear?

“Is it D minor? Try it!
To the piano and try!”
She strikes it, the sweet sound answers
Her touch so light and shy.

And swift as steel to magnet,
The far tones and the near
Unite and are blended together
Smoothly upon the ear.

I thought, if one had the power,
What a beautiful thing 't would be,
Hearing Life's manifold music,
To strike in one's self the key;

Whether joyful or sorry, to answer,
As wind-harps answer the air,
And solve by simple submission
Its riddles of trouble and care.

But the little maid knew nothing
Of thoughts so grave and wise,
As she stole again to her teacher,
And lifted her merry eyes.

And neither dreamed what a picture
They made, the young and the old, —
With his thronging locks of silver,
And her tresses of ruddy gold.

THE KITTIWAKES

LIKE white feathers blown about the rocks,
Like soft snowflakes wavering in the air,
Wheel the Kittiwakes in scattered flocks,
Crying, floating, fluttering everywhere.

Shapes of snow and cloud, they soar and whirl:
Downy breasts that shine like lilies white;
Delicate vaporous tints of gray and pearl
Laid upon their arching wings so light.

Eyes of jet, and beaks and feet of gold, —
Lovelier creatures never sailed in air;
Innocent, inquisitive, and bold,
Knowing not the dangers that they dare.

Stooping now above a beckoning hand,
Following gleams of waving kerchiefs white,
What should they of evil understand,
Though the gun awaits them full in sight?

Though their blood the quiet wave makes red,

Though their broken plumes float far and wide,
Still they linger, hovering overhead,

Still the gun deals death on every side.

Oh, begone, sweet birds, or higher soar!

See you not your comrades low are laid?
But they only flit and call the more,—
Ignorant, unconscious, undismayed.

Nay, then, boatman, spare them! Must they bear
Pangs like these for human vanity?
That their lovely plumage we may wear
Must these fair, pathetic creatures die?

Let the tawny squaws themselves admire,
Decked with feathers, — we can wiser be.
I beseech you, boatman, do not fire!
Stain no more with blood the tranquil sea.

LOST

“Lock the dairy door!” Oh, hark, the cock is crowing proudly!

“Lock the dairy door!” and all the hens are cackling loudly:

'*Chickle, chackle, chee,*' they cry; "*we have n't got
the key,*" they cry;

'*Chickle, chackle, chee!* Oh dear, wherever can
it be!" they cry.

Up and down the garden walks where all the flowers
are blowing,

Out about the golden fields where tall the wheat is
growing,

Through the barn and up the road they cackle and
they chatter:

Cry the children, "Hear the hens! Why, what can
be the matter?"

What scraping and what scratching, what bristling and
what hustling;

The cock stands on the fence, the wind his ruddy
plumage rustling;

Like a soldier grand he stands, and like a trumpet
glorious

Sounds his shout both far and near, imperious and
victorious.

But to Partlets down below, who cannot find the key,
they hear,

"*Lock the dairy door!*" That's all his challenge
says to them, my dear.

Why they had it, how they lost it, must remain a mystery;

I that tell you never heard the first part of the history.

But if you will listen, dear, next time the cock crows proudly,

“*Lock the dairy door!*” you’ll hear him tell the biddies loudly:

“*Chickle, chackle, chee!*” they cry; “*we have n’t got the key!*” they cry;

“*Chickle, chackle, chee!* Oh dear, wherever can’t be!” they cry.

THE KINGFISHER

COULD you have heard the kingfisher scream and scold at me

When I went this morning early down to the smiling sea!

He clamored so loud and harshly, I laughed at him for his pains,

And off he flew with a shattered note, like the sound of falling chains.

He perched on the rock above me, and kept up such a din,

He looked so fine with his collar snow-white beneath
his chin,
And his cap of velvet, black and bright, and his jacket
of lovely blue,
I looked, admired, and called to him, "Good-morning!
How do you do?"

But his kingship was *so* offended! He had n't a
pleasant word,
Only the crossest jargon ever screamed by a bird.
The gray sandpiper on one leg stood still in sheer sur-
prise,
And gazed at me, and gazed at him, with shining bead-
black eyes,

And pensively sent up so sweet and delicate a note,
Ringing so high and clear from out her dainty, mottled
throat,
That echo round the silent shore caught up the clear
refrain,
And sent the charming music back again, and yet
again.

Then the brown song sparrow on the wall made haste
with such a song,
To try and drown that jarring din! but it was all too
strong.

And the swallows, like a steel-blue flash, swept past
and cried aloud,

"Be civil, my dear kingfisher, you're far too grand
and proud."

But it was n't of any use at all, he was too much dis-
pleased,

For only by my absence could his anger be appeased.
So I wandered off, and as I went I saw him flutter
down,

And take his place once more upon the seaweed wet
and brown.

And there he watched for his breakfast, all undis-
turbed at last,

And many a little fish he caught as it was swimming
past.

And I forgot his harsh abuse, for, up in the tall elm-
tree,

A purple finch sat high and sang a heavenly song for
me.

THE WOUNDED CURLEW

By yonder sandy cove where, every day,
The tide flows in and out,

A lonely bird in sober brown and gray
Limbs patiently about;

And round the basin's edge, o'er stones and sand,
 And many a fringing weed,
He steals, or on the rocky ledge doth stand,
 Crying, with none to heed.

But sometimes from the distance he can hear
 His comrades' swift reply ;
Sometimes the air rings with their music clear,
 Sounding from sea and sky.

And then, oh, then his tender voice, so sweet,
 Is shaken with his pain,
For broken are his pinions strong and fleet,
 Never to soar again.

Wounded and lame and languishing he lives,
 Once glad and blithe and free,
And in his prison limits frets and strives
 His ancient self to be.

The little sandpipers about him play,
 The shining waves they skim,
Or round his feet they seek their food, and stay
 As if to comfort him.

My pity cannot help him, though his plaint
 Brings tears of wistfulness ;
Still must he grieve and mourn, forlorn and faint,
 None may his wrong redress.

O bright-eyed boy! was there no better way
A moment's joy to gain
Than to make sorrow that must mar the day
With such despairing pain?

O children, drop the gun, the cruel stone!
Oh, listen to my words,
And hear with me the wounded curlew moan —
Have mercy on the birds!

LITTLE ASSUNTA

CLIMBING the Pincian Hill's long slope,
When the west was bright with a crimson flame,
Her small face glowing with life and hope,
Little Assunta singing came.

From under ilex and olive-tree,
I gazed afar to St. Peter's dome;
Below, for a wondering world to see,
Lay the ruined glories of ancient Rome.

Sunset was sorrowing over the land,
O'er the splendid fountains that leaped in the air,
O'er crumbling tower and temple grand,
Palace, and column, and statue fair.

Little Assunta climbed the steep;
She was a lovely sight to see!
A tint in her olive cheek as deep
As the wild red Roman anemone.

Dark as midnight her braided hair
Over her fathomless eyes of brown;
And over her tresses the graceful square
Of snow-white linen was folded down.

Her quaint black bodice was laced behind;
Her apron was barred with dull rich hues;
Like the ripe pomegranate's tawny rind
Her little gown; and she wore no shoes.

But round her dusk throat's slender grace,
Large, smooth, coral beads were wound;
Like a flower herself in that solemn place
She seemed, just blooming out of the ground.

Up she came, as she walked on air!
I wandered downward with footsteps slow,
Till we met in the midst of the pathway fair,
Bathed in the mournful sunset's glow.

“Buon giorno, Signora!”¹ she said;
Like a wild-bird’s note was her greeting clear.

¹ Good-morning, lady.

“Salve!”¹ I answered, “my little maid;
But ‘t is evening, and not good-morning, dear!”

She stretched her hands with a smile like light,
As if she offered me, joyfully,
Some precious gift, with that aspect bright,
And “Buon giorno!” again sang she.

And so she passed me and upward pressed
Under ilex and olive-tree,
While the flush of sunset died in the west,
And the shadows of twilight folded me.

She carried the morn in her shining eyes!
Evening was mine, and the night to be;
But she stirred my heart with the dawn’s surprise,
And left me a beautiful memory!

INHOSPITALITY

Down on the north wind sweeping
Comes the storm with roaring din;
Sadly, with dreary tumult,
The twilight gathers in.

¹ A term of salutation, pronounced “Salvé,” and meaning “Hail!” or “Welcome!”

The snow-covered little island
Is white as a frosted cake;
And round and round it the billows
Bellow, and thunder, and break.

Within doors the blazing driftwood
Is glowing, ruddy and warm,
And happiness sits at the fireside,
Watching the raging storm.

What fluttered past the window,
All weary and wet and weak,
With the heavily drooping pinions,
And the wicked, crooked beak ?

Cries the little sister, watching,
“ Whither now can he flee ?
Black through the whirling snowflakes
Glooms the awful face of the sea ;

“ And tossed and torn by the tempest,
He must sink in the bitter brine !
Why could n’t we pity and save him
Till the sun again should shine ? ”

They drew her back to the fireside,
And laughed at her cloudy eyes, —
“ What, mourn for that robber-fellow,
The cruellest bird that flies !

“Your song sparrow hardly would thank you,
And which is the dearest, pray?”

But she heard at the doors and windows
The lashing of the spray;

And as ever the shock of the breakers
The heart of their quiet stirred,
She thought, “Oh, would we had sheltered him,
The poor, unhappy bird!”

Where the boats before the house-door
Are drawn up from the tide,
On the tallest prow he settles,
And furls his wings so wide.

Uprises the elder brother,
Uprises the sister too;
“Nay, brother, he comes for shelter!
Spare him! What would you do?”

He laughs and is gone for his rifle.
And steadily takes his aim;
But the wild wind seizes his yellow beard,
And blows it about like flame.

Into his eyes the snow sifts,
Till he cannot see aright:
Ah, the cruel gun is baffled!
And the weary hawk takes flight;

And slowly up he circles,
Higher and higher still;
The fierce wind catches and bears him away
O'er the bleak crest of the hill.

UNDER THE LIGHT-HOUSE

BENEATH the tall, white light-house strayed the children,
In the May morning sweet;
About the steep and rough gray rocks they wandered
With hesitating feet;
For scattered far and wide the birds were lying,
Quiet, and cold, and dead,
That met, while they were swiftly winging northward,
The fierce light overhead;
And as the frail moths in the summer evenings
Fly to the candle's blaze,
Rushed wildly at the splendor, finding only
Death in those blinding rays.
And here were bobolink, and wren, and sparrow,
Veery, and oriole,
And purple finch, and rosy grosbeak, swallows,
And kingbirds quaint and droll;
Gay soldier blackbirds, wearing on their shoulders
Red, gold-edged epaulets,
And many a homely brown, red-breasted robin,
Whose voice no child forgets.

And yellow-birds — what shapes of perfect beauty !

What silence after song !

And mingled with them, unfamiliar warblers

That to far woods belong.

Clothing the gray rocks with a mournful beauty

By scores the dead forms lay,

That, dashed against the tall tower's cruel windows,

Dropped like the spent sea spray.

How many an old and sun-steeped barn, far inland,

Should miss about its eaves

The twitter and the gleam of these swift swallows !

And, swinging 'mid the leaves,

The oriole's nest, all empty in the elm-tree,

Would cold and silent be,

And nevermore these robins make the meadows

Ring with their ecstasy.

Would not the gay swamp-border miss the blackbirds,

Whistling so loud and clear ?

Would not the bobolinks' delicious music

Lose something of its cheer ?

"Yet," thought the wistful children, gazing landward,

"The birds will not be missed ;

Others will take their place in field and forest,

Others will keep their tryst :

And we, we only, know how death has met them ;

We wonder and we mourn

That from their innocent and bright existence

Thus roughly they are torn."

And so they laid the sweet, dead shapes together,
Smoothing each ruffled wing,
Perplexed and sorrowful, and pondering deeply
The meaning of this thing.

(Too hard to fathom for the wisest nature
Crowned with the snows of age!)

And all the beauty of the fair May morning
Seemed like a blotted page.

They bore them down from the rough cliffs of granite
To where the grass grew green,

And laid them 'neath the soft turf, all together,
With many a flower between;

And, looking up with wet eyes, saw how brightly
Upon the summer sea

Lay the clear sunlight, how white sails were shining,
And small waves laughed in glee:

And somehow, comfort grew to check their grieving,
A sense of brooding care,

As if, in spite of death, a loving presence
Filled all the viewless air.

“What should we fear?” whispered the little children,
“There is no thing so small
But God will care for it in earth or heaven:
He sees the sparrows fall!”

PICCOLA

Poor, sweet Piccola! Did you hear
What happened to Piccola, children dear?
'T is seldom Fortune such favor grants
As fell to this little maid of France.

'T was Christmas-time, and her parents poor
Could hardly drive the wolf from the door,
Striving with poverty's patient pain
Only to live till summer again.

No gifts for Piccola! Sad were they
When dawned the morning of Christmas-day;
Their little darling no joy might stir,
St. Nicholas nothing would bring to her!

But Piccola never doubted at all
That something beautiful must befall
Every child upon Christmas-day,
And so she slept till the dawn was gray.

And full of faith, when at last she woke,
She stole to her shoe as the morning broke;
Such sounds of gladness filled all the air,
'T was plain St. Nicholas had been there!

In rushed Piccola sweet, half wild:

Never was seen such a joyful child.

“See what the good saint brought!” she cried,

And mother and father must peep inside.

Now such a story who ever heard?

There was a little shivering bird!

A sparrow, that in at the window flew,

Had crept into Piccola’s tiny shoe!

“How good poor Piccola must have been!”

She cried, as happy as any queen,

While the starving sparrow she fed and warmed,

And danced with rapture, she was so charmed.

Children, this story I tell to you,

Of Piccola sweet and her bird, is true.

In the far-off land of France, they say,

Still do they live to this very day.

MOZART AT THE FIRESIDE

AUTUMN nights grow chilly:

See how faces bloom

By the cheerful firelight,

In the quiet room!

Mother's amber necklace,
Father's beard of gold,
Rosy cheeks of little boys
All glowing from the cold,

Basket heaped with barberries,
Coral red and bright,
Little Silver's shaggy fur
All shining in the light!

Barberries bright they're picking,
And smile and do not speak;
Happy little youngest boy
Kisses mother's cheek, —

First mother's and then father's,
And nestles his pretty head
In the shining fur of Silver,
While they pick the barberries red.

At the piano sitting,
One touches the beautiful keys;
Silent they sit and listen
To magical melodies.

Heavenly, tender, and hopeful,
Balm for the saddest heart,
Rises the lovely music
Of the divine Mozart!

The children hear the birds sing,
And the voices of the May;
They feel the freshness of morning,
Before the toil of the day;

But father and mother listen
To a deeper undertone,
A strong arm, full of comfort, seems
About life's trouble thrown.

O children, when your summer
Passes, and winter is near,
When the sky is dim that was so bright,
And the way seems long and drear,

Remember the mighty master
Still touches the human heart,
Speaking afar from heaven,
The wonderful Mozart!

He can bring back your childhood
With his strains of airy grace,
Till life seems fresh and beautiful
Again for a little space.

With voices of lofty sweetness
He shall encourage you,
Till all good things seem possible,
And Heaven's best promise true;

Till health and strength and loveliness
Blossom from stone and clod,
And the sad old world grows bright again
With the cheerfulness of God.

THE FLOCK OF DOVES

THE world was like a wilderness
Of soft and downy snow;
The trees were plumed with feathery flakes,
And the ground was white below.

Came the little mother out to the gate
To watch for her children three;
Her hood was red as a poppy-flower,
And rosy and young was she.

She took the snow in her cunning hands,
As waiting she stood alone,
And lo! in a moment, beneath her touch,
A fair white dove had grown.

A flock she wrought, and on the fence
Set them in bright array,
With folded wings, or pinions spread,
Ready to fly away.

And then she hid by the pine-tree tall,
For the children's tones rang sweet,
As home from school, through the drifts so light,
They sped with merry feet.

"O Nannie, Nannie! See the fence
Alive with doves so white!"

"Oh, hush! don't frighten them away!"
They whisper with delight.

They crept so soft, they crept so still,
The wondrous sight to see,
The little mother pushed the gate,
And laughed out joyfully.

She clasped them close, she kissed their cheeks,
And lips so sweet and red.

"The birds are only made of snow!
You are my doves," she said.

THE KAISERBLUMEN

HAVE you heard of the Kaiserblume,
O little children sweet,
That grows in the fields of Germany,
Light waving among the wheat?

'T is only a simple flower,
 But were I to try all day,
Its grace and charm and beauty
 I could n't begin to say.

By field and wood and roadside,
 Delicate, hardy, and bold,
It scatters in wild profusion
 Its blossoms manifold.

The children love it dearly,
 And with dancing feet they go
To seek it with song and laughter;
 And all the people know

Stern Kaiser Wilhelm loves it:
 He said, "It shall honored be,
Henceforth 't is the Kaiserblume,
 The flower of Germany."

Then he bade his soldiers wear it,
 Tied in a gay cockade,
And the quaint and humble blossom
 His royal token made.

Said little Hans to Gretchen,
 One summer morning fair,
As they played in the fields together,
 And sang in the fragrant air:

“Oh, look at the Kaiserblumen
That grow in the grass so thick!
Let’s gather our arms full, Gretchen,
And take to the Emperor, quick!

“For never were any so beautiful,
Waving so blue and bright.”
So all they could carry they gathered,
Dancing with their delight.

Then under the blazing sunshine
They trudged o’er the long, white road
That led to the Kaiser’s palace,
With their gayly nodding load.

But long ere the streets of the city
They trod with their little feet,
As hot they grew and as tired
As their corn-flowers bright and sweet.

And Gretchen’s cheeks were rosy
With a weary travel stain.
And her tangled hair o’er her blue, blue eyes
Fell down in a golden rain.

And at last all the nodding blossoms
Their shining heads hung down;
But, “Cheer up, Gretchen!” cried little Hans,
“We’ve almost reached the town.

“We ’ll knock at the door of the palace,
And won’t he be glad to see
The flowers we ’ve brought so far for him ?
Think, Gretchen, how pleased he ’ll be !”

So they plodded patiently onward,
And with hands so soft and small
They knocked at the palace portal,
And sweetly did cry and call:

“Please open the door, O Kaiser !
We ’ve brought some flowers for you,
Our arms full of Kaiserblumen,
All gay and bright and blue !”

But nobody heeded or answered,
Till at last a soldier grand
Bade the weary wanderers leave the gate,
With a gruff and stern command.

But, “No !” cried the children, weeping;
Though trembling and sore afraid,
And clasping their faded flowers,
“We *must* come in !” they said.

A lofty and splendid presence
The echoing stair came down;
To know the king there was no need
That he should wear a crown.

And the children cried: "O Kaiser,
We have brought your flowers so far!
And we are so tired and hungry!
See, Emperor, here they are!"

They held up their withered posies,
While into the Emperor's face
A beautiful light came stealing,
And he stooped with a stately grace;

Taking the ruined blossoms,
With gentle words and mild
He comforted with kindness
The heart of each trembling child.

And that was a wonderful glory
That the little ones befell!
And when their heads are hoary,
They still will the story tell,

How they sat at the Kaiser's table,
And dined with princes and kings,
In that far-off day of splendor,
Filled full of marvelous things!

And home, when the sun was setting,
The happy twain were sent,
In a gleaming golden carriage,
With horses magnificent.

And like the wildest vision
Of fairy-land it seemed;
Hardly could Hans and Gretchen
Believe they had not dreamed.

And even their children's children
Eager to hear will be,
How they carried to Kaiser Wilhelm
The flowers of Germany.

THE GREAT BLUE HERON

A WARNING

THE great blue heron stood all alone
By the edge of the solemn sea
On a broken boulder of gray trap stone;
He was lost in a reverie.

And when I climbed the low rough wall
At the top of the sloping beach,
To gather the driftwood great and small,
Left scattered to dry and bleach,

I saw as if carved from the broken block
On which he was standing, the bird
Like a part of the boulder of blue-gray rock,
For never a feather he stirred.

I paused to watch him. Below my breath
“O beautiful creature,” I cried,
“Do you know you are standing here close to your
death,
By the brink of the quiet tide!

“You cannot know of the being called Man!
The lord of creation is he,
And he slays all earth’s creatures wherever he can
In the air or the land or the sea.

“He’s not a hospitable friend! If he sees
Some wonderful, beautiful thing
That runs in the woodland, or floats in the breeze
On the bannerlike breadth of its wing,

“Straight he goes for his gun, its sweet life to destroy.
For mere pleasure of killing alone
He will ruin its beauty and quench all its joy
Though ’t is useless to him as a stone.”

Then I cried aloud, “Fly! before over the sand
This lord of creation arrives
With his shot and his powder and gun in his hand,
For the spoiling of innocent lives!”

Oh, stately and graceful and slender and tall
The Heron stood silent and still,

As if careless of warning and deaf to my call,
Unconscious of danger or ill.

“Fly! fly to some lonelier place, and fly fast!
To the very North Pole! Anywhere!”

Then he rose and soared high, and swept eastward at
last,
Trailing long legs and wings in the air.

“Now perhaps you may live and be happy,” I said,
“Sail away, Beauty, fast as you can!
Put the width of the earth and the breadth of the sea
Betwixt you and the Being called Man.”

THE LOST BELL

A LEGEND OF THE ISLAND OF RÜGEN IN THE BALTIC SEA

“Oh, where is my bell,” sighed the brownie,
“My sweet, sweet silver bell,
That tinkled and swung from my scarlet cap;
Now who in the world can tell?”

On the plain in the island of Rügen
Danced the delicate fairy folk,
And the tiny bell from the tiny cap
Its curious fastening broke.

The shepherd boy Fritz next morning,
Driving his wandering sheep
'Mid the scattered stones of the Giants' graves
Saw the pretty plaything peep

Sparkling among the heather,
And fastened it to himself;
For how could he know that the bell belonged
To an underground little elf?

But the elf was in such trouble!
Aye, wandering up and down,
He was searching here and searching there,
With the tears on his cheek of brown.

For while it was missing, no slumber
Might visit the fairy's eyes;
Still must he sleepless fill the air
With mournful wails and cries.

"Oh, who has borne off my treasure
From the ground where it did lie?
Is it raven or crow or jackdaw?
Or magpie noisy and sly?"

Then he changed his shape to a beautiful bird,
And over the land he flew,
Over the waters of Ralov,
And the fields of green Unruh.

He searched the nest of all the birds,
He talked with them, great and small,
But never a trace of the little bell,
Could the brownie find at all.

To the green, green fields of Unruh
Went Fritz to pasture his sheep,
For the place was sunny and fair and still
And the grass grew thick and deep.

The bird flew over. The sheep bells,
Soft tinkling, sounded low;
The wee fay thought of his talisman lost,
And warbled sad and slow.

The boy looked up and listened:
“Now what can that queer bird be?
If he thinks their bells make my cattle rich,
Why, what would he think of me?”

Then he drew forth from his pocket
The treasure that he had found,
And the magic silver rang out clear
With a keen delicious sound.

The sprite in the bird’s shape heard it,
And fairly shook with delight,
Dropped down behind a bush near by,
Hid safely out of sight.

Swift drew off his dress of feathers,
And took the shape of a crone
Who hobbled up to the shepherd lad,
And spoke in a coaxing tone:

“Good-even, good friend, good-even!
What a charming bell you ring!
I’d like such an one for my grandson —
Will you sell me the pretty thing?”

“No, no, for there is n’t another
In the whole wide world so fine;
My sheep will follow its tinkle,
And ask for no other sign.

“Oh, listen! Can any sorrow
Hold out against such a tone?
The weariest hour ’t will ring away,
And conquer a heart of stone.”

The old dame offered him money,
A glittering golden heap,
But Fritz stood firm; “Nay, nay,” he said,
“My sweet, sweet bell I ’ll keep.”

Then a shepherd staff she showed him,
Most beautiful to see,
Of snow-white wood all wrought and carved;
“Take this, and the bell give me.

“So long as you guide your cattle
With this you will surely thrive,
And all good fortune will follow
Wherever your flocks you drive.”

She reached him the stick. Her gesture,
So mystic, bewitched him quite,
So strange and lovely her dazzling smile,
He was blind in its sudden light.

He stretched out his hand and, “Take it,
The bell for the staff,” he cried.
Like a light breeze over the fields and trees
The old crone seemed to glide.

She was gone like the down of a thistle,
Or as mists with the wind that blend,
And a tiny whir like a whistle thin
Set all his hair on end.

The staff was his, but the bell was gone,
Spirited quite away;
Fritz looked at his prize with doubtful eyes —
But who so glad as the fay?

And he kept his fairy promise,
And Fortune to Fritz was kind,
For all his labors prospered,
And all things worked to his mind.

Before he was eighteen, mark you,
His flocks were his own to keep,
And soon in the island of Rügen
He was master of all the sheep.

At last he was able to purchase
A knight's estate, and became
A nobleman stately and gracious,
With a loved and honored name.

Now would n't you like, little people,
Such a fairy treasure to find ?
Pick up from the grass such a magic bell
And meet with a brownie so kind ?

IN THE LILAC-BUSH

OH, look, where the lilac-bush, stout and tall,
Growing close to the window low,
Is hiding a robin's nest close to the wall,
Softly piled with the light white snow !

Pray you, be careful, dear little folk gay.
Spare the snug house that the pretty bird made ;
Don't throw the storm of your snowballs this way,
And in April your care will be more than repaid.

For back with the spring your small neighbor will flit
Straight to his nest in the lilac-bush tall,
Here 'mid the buds on the bough he will sit
And talk to his mate with sweet twitter and call.

Don't you remember his glowing red breast,
And his olive brown coat and his shining black
eyes?

How he works for his dinner and watches his nest,
A citizen sober and happy and wise!

Just out of the window you 'll have but to peep
Into the nest, such a wonder to see!

The heaven-blue eggs, lying still and asleep,
So soon all astir with the birdlings to be!

Think of the joy of that beautiful sight,
And the rapture of bliss 'mid the lovely green leaves
And the rich purple flowers, — a world of delight
All safely shut in 'neath the sheltering eaves!

Be careful, children, and kind in your play;
Protect his dear home for the brave little bird;
Don't charge with the storm of your snowballs this
way,
And when April comes back his sweet thanks will
be heard.

A POPPY SEED

"TELL you a story," my beautiful dear,
"Of nixies, and pixies, and fairies with wings?"
Well, curl up close in the corner here,
And I'll show you more astonishing things!

I give you this small white packet to hold.
"It rustles," you say. Both the ends are sealed.
Patience a moment, and you shall be told
Of the hundreds of captives that lie concealed

In this little paper. "What, living things?"
Yes, full of life. "Won't I take one out?"
Yes, only be careful, — they have no wings,
But your lightest breathing will blow them about.

There, one in your warm pink palm I lay:
You hardly can see it! "Does anything hide
In that wee atom of dust?" you say.
Yes, wonderful glory is folded inside!

Robes, my dear, that are fit for kings;
Scarlet splendor that dazzles the eyes;
Buds, flowers, leaves, stalks, — so many things!
You look in my face with doubting surprise,

And ask, "Is it really, truly true?"

No fairy story at all this time!

Don't you remember the poppy that grew

At the foot of the trellis where sweet peas climb,

Last summer, close to the doorstep, where

You and I loved to sit in the sun,

And see the butterflies float in the air

When the long bright day was almost done?

Don't you remember what joy we had

Watching that poppy grow high and higher,

In its lovely gray-green garments clad,

Till the buds one evening showed streaks of fire,

And next day — oh! it was all ablaze;

Three or four flowers at once outburst

In the early sun's low, golden rays —

And you were down at the doorstep first —

And what magnificence met our sight!

What a heavenly time we had, we two,

Just adoring it, lost in delight!

For the gray-green leaves were spangled with dew,

And the flowers, like banners of silken flame

Unfurled, stood each on its slender stem,

While the soft breeze over them went and came,

Lightly and tenderly rocking them.

Dearest, don't you remember it all?

How still it was! Not a whisper of sound,
Till a bird sang out from the garden wall,

And you slid from the step and stood on the ground,

And the poppy was higher than your bright head!

Gently downward one flower you bent
To see in the midst of its burning red
The delicate greens in a glory blent.

Bronze-green pollen on glowing rays

From a centre of palest emerald light
In a brilliant halo beneath our gaze, —
You have n't forgotten that exquisite sight?

No, indeed! I was sure of it! Well,
All that perfection of shape and hue,
That wealth of beauty no tongue can tell,
Lies hid in this seed I have given to you.

Just such a speck in the friendly ground

I planted last May by the doorstep wide;
The selfsame marvel that then we found
This atom of dust holds shut inside.

You can't believe it? But all are there, —

Leaves, roots, flowers, stalks, color, and glow;
Tell me a story that can compare
With this for a wonder, if any you know!

BE LOVELY WITHIN

LITTLE Evelyn's cheeks bloomed in delicate pink,
And her clustering hair framed with tendril and curl
A face so lovely you never would think
She could be for a moment a cross little girl.

Yet cross she was, in a constant fret,
Every hour she spoiled with some trouble or strife,
Till every one said: "Well, I never have met
Such an ill-natured child in the whole of my life!"

Her sister Peggy was plain and small,
Freckled and homely, with straight brown hair;
But you never thought of her looks at all,
For she seemed to be everything sunny and fair.

"I can't!" and "I won't!" that was Evelyn's cry
From morning till night, against all she was told;
While Peggy's low voice would be saying, "I'll try,"
With a patience and hope that were good to behold.

Till at last Peggy's freckles more beautiful grew
In every one's sight than all Evelyn's charms
Of pink cheeks, golden hair, and eyes violet blue;
No one wished to fold her in affectionate arms!

But Peggy! Love found her wherever she went,
Clasped her warm little hand and looked into her
eyes,
Smiled on her and blessed her with joy and content,
For her spirit within was so sweet and so wise.

Never mind, children dear, about plainness of face,
But strive all you can to be lovely within,
And the beautiful spirit will clothe you with grace,
And this is a joy every mortal can win.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

OH, sweetly the robin warbled, wooing his little mate
Till she twittered her joyous answer, — he had not
long to wait!

Oh, the air was warm and spicy, there was sunshine and
soft showers;
To and fro they flitted gayly through the changeful
April hours.

They chose a quiet pine-tree and began to weave their
nest
Where a forked branch gave support on which their
cosy home to rest.

And happy, happy, happy, they worked from morn till
night,

Making the fragrant air to ring with carols of delight.

With straws and sticks and twigs and threads and
scraps and plastering clay,

And bits of leaves and wool and shreds they worked
the livelong day.

We watched them finish all, and thought to peep in
presently

The lovely turquoise-colored eggs like jewels fair to
see.

They sought their dainty dwelling with the dawn's
first rosy light;

Oh, horror! What was this strange thing that met their
startled sight!

Their pretty woven cradle cup was filled up to the
brim

With a huge cold mottled tree-toad, blinking o'er its
tidy rim!

So well content, so much at home his lazy toadship
seemed!

While o'er him fluttered both the birds and scolded
loud and screamed,

And dashed at him with angry claw, and pecked with
sharpened beak,
Striving with all their tiny might vengeance on him to
wreak.

In vain, he would not budge an inch! He liked it
much too well;
So lazy, if he breathed or no, you could n't really
tell.

The frantic little house-builders took counsel thought-
fully,
Once more they swooped with ruffled plumes upon
their enemy.

And strove to hoist him o'er the edge, prying with
beak and head
And strenuous shoulder, but he lay heavy as lump of
lead.

What could they do? In deep despair upon a bough
they sat,
And gazed down at their hated guest, so ugly and so
fat,

And in their sweet bird language excitedly they talked,
Debating eagerly how best that big toad could be
balked.

At last they settled it. They swept down on the nest
again,

With wrath and fury in their hearts, and then with
might and main,

Working below it swift they tore their cunning ma-
sonry

Piecemeal from underneath the toad reposing stupidly!

Crumbled the clay, outflew the shreds, the straws
were scattered wide.

Larger and larger grew the hole as fast their work they
plied.

Until at last a slip, a crash! Down came that clammy
toad

Thump! on the ground, and quawk! quoth he, and
hopped across the road,

And hid him in the grass, while high above his head
the birds

Sang Victory! triumphantly, as plain as human words!

But they could not bear the sight of that dear ruined
home of theirs,

The centre of such hopes and joys, and such delightful
cares.

So they turned away and flew afar, and built another nest,
And let us hope were spared the woe of such another guest!

SIR WILLIAM PEPPERRELL'S WELL

ISLES OF SHOALS, A. D. 1790-1892

LITTLE maid Margaret and I,
All in the sweet May weather,
Roamed merrily and peacefully
The island slopes together.

The sun was midway in the west
That golden afternoon;
The sparrow sat above his nest
And sang his friendly tune.

The sky was clear, the sea was calm,
The wind blew from the south
And touched us with a breath of balm,
And kissed her happy mouth.

The joyful, smiling little maid!
Her pretty hand in mine, —
“Look, Thea, at the flowers,” she said.
“See how the eyebrights shine!”

Scattered like pearls all milky fair
Where'er our feet were set,
They glimmered, swayed by gentle air,
For little Margaret.

And here the crowfoot's gold was spilled,
And there the violet
Its cream-white buds with fragrance filled,
And all for Margaret.

I took a grassy path that led
Into a rocky dell.
“Come and I ’ll show you, dear,” I said,
“Sir William Pepperrell’s well.”

In the deep shadow of the rock
The placid water hid,
And seemed the sky above to mock
Arums and ferns amid.

“Is this Sir William Pepperrell’s well ?
But, Thea, who was he ? ”
“A nobleman, the records tell,
A lord of high degree.”

“And did he live here ? ” “Sometimes, yes ;
Yonder his house stood, dear,
By all the scattered stones you ’d guess
A dwelling once stood here.

"There lie the doorsteps large and square,
Where feet went out and in
Long years ago; a broken stair;
And here the walls begin."

"How long ago did they live here?"
Gravely the small maid spoke;
"And tell me, did you know them, Thea, —
Sir William Pepperrell's folk?"

"A hundred years they have been dead, —
No, dear, we never met!"
"But, Thea, you're so old," she said,
"You know you might forget!"

"I'm only six, I'm very new,
I can't remember much."
She clasped me, as she nearer drew,
With light and gentle touch.

"Tell me, where are they now?" asked she.
Oh, question ages old!
"That, Margaret, is a mystery
No mortal has been told.

"Here stood the house, there lies the well,
And nothing more we know,
Except that history's pages tell
They lived here long ago."

With serious eyes she gazed at me,
And for a moment's space
A shadow of perplexity
Flitted across her face.

Then dancing down the sunlit way
She gathered bud and bell,
And 'mid its ferns forgotten lay
Sir William Pepperrell's well.

THE CHICKADEE

CARE keeps its hold with constant clasp,
Whatever may betide us;
Grief waits the shrinking heart to grasp,
Pacing, half veiled, beside us.
But oh, the sky is blue,
And oh, the sun is bright!
And the chickadee in the dark pine-tree
Carols his meek delight.

The earth in silent snows is bound;
Want grinds and pain oppresses;
Life's awful problems who shall sound?
Its riddles sad who guesses?
But oh, the sky is blue,
And oh, the sun is bright!

And the chickadee in the tall pine-tree
Sings in the cold's despite.

Give me of thy wise hope, dear bird,
Who brav'st the bitter weather!
Share the glad message thou hast heard,
And let us sing together.
The winter winds blow wild,
No storm can thee affright.
Thy trust teach me, O chickadee,
Sweet chanting from thy height.

SPRING PLANTING-TIME

WHAT will you sow, little children, what will you sow?
In your garden you wish that sweet flowers would blossom and grow?
Then be careful to choose from the myriads of wonderful seeds
The caskets that lock up delight, and beware of the weeds!

If you sow nettles, alas for the crop you will reap!
Stings and poison and pain, bitter tears for your eyes to weep.

If you plant lilies and roses and pinks and sweet peas
What beauty will charm you, what perfumes on every
breeze!

Thus will it be, little folk, in the garden of life;
Sow seeds of ill-nature, you 'll reap only sorrow and
strife;
But pleasant, kind words, gentle deeds, happy thoughts
if you sow,
What roses and lilies of love will spring round you
and grow!

Smiles will respond to yours, brighter than marigolds
are,
And sweeter than fragrance of any sweet flower, by
far;
From the blossoms of beautiful deeds will a blessing
arise,
And a welcome at sight of you kindle in every one's
eyes.

Then what will you sow, my dear children, what will
you sow?
Seeds of kindness, of sweetness, of patience, drop
softly, and lo!
Love shall blossom around you in joy and in beauty,
and make
A garden of Paradise here upon earth for your sake.

THE ALBATROSS

He spreads his wings like banners to the breeze,
 He cleaves the air afloat on pinions wide,
Leagues upon leagues across the lonely seas
 He sweeps above the vast, uneasy tide.

For days together through the trackless skies,
 Steadfast, without a quiver of his plumes,
Without a moment's pause for rest he flies
 Through dazzling sunshine and through cloudy
 glooms.

Down the green gulfs he slides, or skims the foam,
 Searching for booty with an eager eye,
Hovering aloft where the long breakers comb
 O'er wrecks forlorn that topple helplessly.

He loves the tempest, he is glad to see
 The roaring gale to heaven the billows toss,
For strong to battle with the storm is he,
 The mystic bird, the wandering albatross!

THE NEW YEAR

THE snow lies still and white,
At the gate of the glad New Year,
Whose face with hope is bright
Though the wintry world is drear.

She smiles with welcome sweet,
She speaks in accents mild;
Enter with willing feet
And the heart of a little child.

So shall you treasures find
Better than lands or gold,
Friends that are true and kind,
Love that is wealth untold.

Humbly my lessons learn,
So shall you wisdom gain
Deep peace your soul shall earn
Through the discipline of pain.

Hark to the New Year's voice
With its promise of hope and cheer!
Courage, brave hearts, rejoice!
For God is always near.

Skies may be dark with storm,
While fierce the north wind blows,
Yet earth at heart is warm,
And the snowdrift hides the rose.

AN OPEN SECRET

WHAT is it that gives to the plainest face
The charm of the noblest beauty ?
Not the thought of the duty of happiness,
But the happiness of duty !

This is life's lesson, children dear,
They are blest who learn it early,
For it brightens the darkest way with cheer
Though Fortune's face is surly.

There 's a certain narrow, quiet path
Of daily thinking and living,
Of little acts of sacrifice,
Of loving and forgiving, —

Of patience and obedience,
Of gentle speech and action,
Of choosing the right and leaving the wrong
With a sunny satisfaction, —

And if we never leave this path
For the thing the world calls pleasure,
There will come to meet us a heavenly joy
Beyond all power to measure.

For on this narrow, quiet way
God's angels move forever,
Waiting to crown with cheer divine
Our every high endeavor.

Yes, this is what lends to the lowliest face
The charm of the noblest beauty ;
Not the thought of the duty of happiness,
But the happiness of duty !

GRANDMOTHER TO HER GRANDSON

OII, what are all life's treasures worth
Compared to this love and its sweet surprise,
My little heaven upon the earth,
With your pale gold hair and your serious eyes.

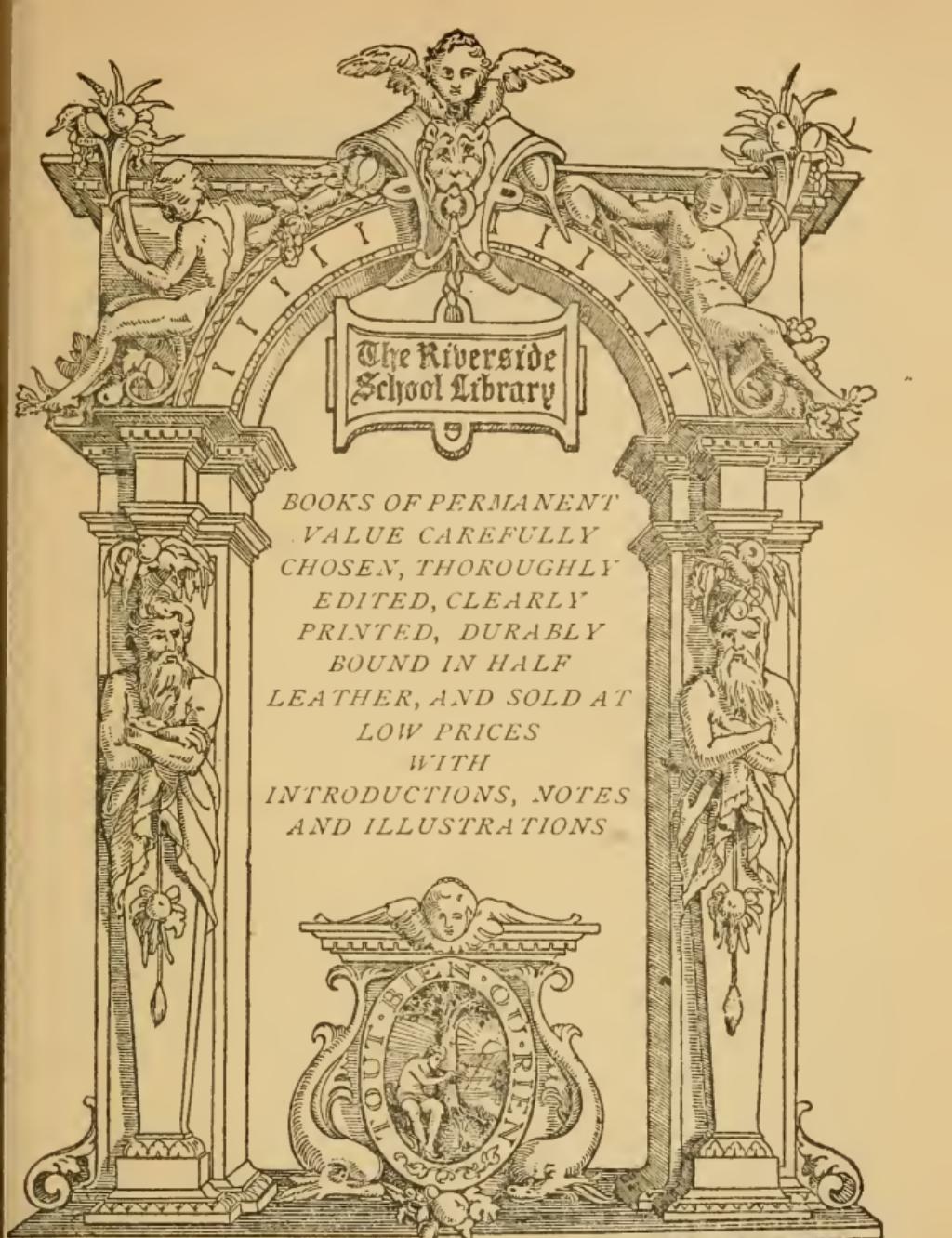
Who could have dreamed that a joy like this
Lay in wait on life's downward slope,
To flood the heart with a freshet of bliss,
And brighten eve with the morning's hope !

How dear the sound of the little feet,
And the clasp of the little hand how dear.
And the little voice that falls so sweet,
Like trilling music upon my ear!

Oh, to shield you from all life's harms,
My fair white lamb with the innocent eyes,
To gather you close in my loving arms
Safe from the frown of the lowering skies!

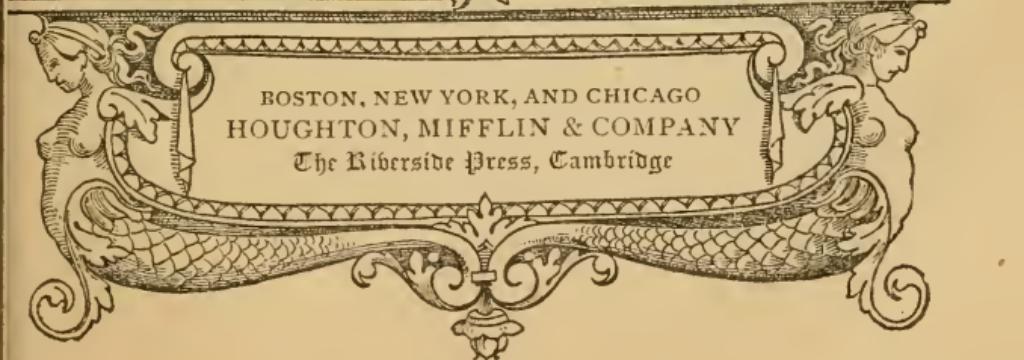
But into the wide world you must go
From home's soft nest and its shelter warm,
Sorrow to meet and care to know
In ways that are rough and dark with storm.

Heaven be good to you, dearest one!
Help you to fight all the powers of ill,
Through life's long day to its setting sun
Keep you God's soldier conquering still.



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